

George Ripley's
Compound of Alchymy
(1591)

Stanford J. Linden

Ashgate

Alexandria • Burlington, USA • Singapore • Sydney

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Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

Ripley's Life and Works

Although there is reasonably close agreement on some few facts that we have concerning the life of George Ripley, there are large areas of uncertainty and inconsistency. Modern scholars generally agree that Ripley was born about 1415 at Ripley in Yorkshire and was descended from generations of notable ancestors, the de Ripley family, who were originally followers of William the Conqueror.¹ He travelled widely on the Continent in search of alchemical wisdom and claims to have discovered it in Italy; these travels, it is thought, also took him to the island of Rhodes, where he was a guest of and a lavish contributor to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Upon returning to England he took up (or more likely resumed) residence as a canon regular at the Augustinian priory at Bridlington in Yorkshire, where he conducted alchemical experiments and authored a large number of related works.² Elias Ashmole reports that in old age Ripley be-

¹It is thought that the place-name "Ripley" goes back to Roman times and is derived from *ripa*, the water banks, plus *lea*, a pasture. For a brief account of the geographical site and early history of the de Ripley family, see John Thorpe, *Ripley: Its History and Antiquities* (Harrogate: Thomas Hollins, and London: Whittaker, 1866), 1-6, 27-32; for detailed discussion of early families associated with Ripley the town (but no mention of George Ripley), see W. T. Lancaster, *The Early History of Ripley and the Ingilby Family* (Leeds and London: John Whitehead & Son, 1918). According to Lancaster, the male line of the Ripley family failed in the "earlier part of the fourteenth century" (11), at which time the female heir, from whom George Ripley descended, married into the Ingilby family (Thorpe, 28).

²For brief biographical accounts, see Robert Steele's in the *DNB*; John Ferguson, *Bibliotheca Chemica*, vol. 2 (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1906; reprint, London: Derek Verschoyle, 1954), 276-78; E.J. Holmyard, *Alchemy* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1968), 186-89. On the Augustinian canons regular of an earlier

came a Carmelite at the monastery of St. Butolph near Boston in Lincolnshire and that he died about 1490.³

This generally received biographical sketch is largely lacking in confirming evidence as well as finer details. In particular, I have found it impossible to determine with certainty when Ripley's reported nine years of travel on the Continent took place and whether his extended visit to Rhodes occurred within this segment of his life or at another time. Because of this uncertainty it is impossible to determine when he returned to England and began (or continued) life as a canon regular at the Augustinian priory at Bridlington. In order to establish the following rough, often conjectural chronology, I have drawn primarily upon the few fragments from Ripley's works that contain autobiographical information as well as information provided by both early writers and modern scholars and archivists. Specific references are cited wherever appropriate. I have depended on Elias Ashmole's translations of the earlier authorities that he cites (e.g., John Bale, John Pits [Pitseus], Ludovicus Combachius)⁴ and use *TCB* as the abbreviation for his *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*.

Chronology

1415: Born at Ripley, near Harrogate, in Yorkshire (Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, 455–59; Thorpe, 28–31; Ferguson, 2:277); Holmyard, 186; the “Sonne of a Gentleman”; “his Relation of Kindred lay in the Northerne parts” of England (*TCB*, 457).⁵

period, primarily the twelfth century, see J.D. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and Their Introduction into England* (London: S.P.C.K., 1950), esp. chaps. 4 and 5. This valuable study includes only brief, passing references to the Bridlington priory, which had been founded early in the twelfth century; see esp. 120–21, 175, 193, 228–9. The influential Bridlington *Dialogue* apparently does not include alchemy as a “fitting pursuit” for a canon regular (see p. 193).

³*Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (London, 1652), 458.

⁴The most important early works that contain biographical information, both cited by Ashmole, are: John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustriū maioris Brytannie, quam Angliam* (Basel, [1557–59]), 622–23, and Joannis Pitsei, *Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis. Tomus Primus Quatuor Partes complectens, quorum Elenchum pagina sequens indicat* (Paris, 1619), 677–78.

⁵The Ripley Parish Register does not begin until 1552 (Thorpe, 65), a fact confirmed

(1430s?): Ashmole conjectures that Ripley's "*Ecclesiasticall Promotion* hapned to be at *Bridlington*, a *Towne* in the *East Riding* of *Yorkshire*" (TCB, 457); Waite, citing no evidence, states that Ripley "entered, at an early age, among the regular canons of Bridlington, in the diocese of York" (*Lives*, 135); Ferguson also implies that he joined the order at an early age (2:277).⁶

1450-1470: A period of "Erronious Experiments." According to an unidentified manuscript Ashmole consulted, Ripley "beseeches all men, wheresoever they shall meete with any of his *Experiments* written by *Him*, or that go under his *Name*, (from the yeare 1450. to the yeare 1470.) either to *burne* them or afford them no *Credit*, being written according to his *esteeme* [i.e., general estimate or opinion], not *prooffe*; and which (afterwards upon *tryall*) he found *false* and *vaine*: for soe long was he seeking the *Stone*, but in the truth of *practise* had not found it, till towards the end of that yeare, and then (saith He) *Inveni quem diligigit anima mea*" (TCB, 456).

1460s-70s(?): Travels on the Continent for nine years, including Louvain, Italy, France, and Germany: in order to "copiously and plentifully study *Philosophy*, and accomplish what he conceived in his *mind*, he boldly travailed through *France*, *Germany*, and *Italy*, where he grew into familiarity with severall of the most Learned men," (Pits, *de Illustribus Anglicae Scriptoribus*, 1619, p. 677, quoted in TCB, 458). In the *Compound of*

in a letter (14 April 1999) from Mr. W.J. Connor of the West Yorkshire Archive Service. Ashmole does not provide the date of Ripley's birth but takes issue sharply with Philemon Holland's statement in his translation of William Camden's *Britannia* (London, 1637), 295, that Ripley was born in the village of Ripley in Surrey and that he was a "*Ring-leader of our Alchimists, and a mysticall Impostor*" (TCB, 457). Ashmole's knowledge of Ripley's Yorkshire background was derived from "some ancient Manuscript Copies" of the *Medulla*, that he has seen (TCB, 457).

⁶In a letter (4 May 1999), Dr. M. Rogers of the East Riding (Yorkshire) Archives and Records Service states that this office holds "no original records relating to, or manuscripts produced at, the Augustinian Priory at Bridlington." Ambiguity in a line from Thomas Charnock's *The Breviary of Naturall Philosophy* (TCB, 291-303), prompts Ashmole to consider—and reject—the possibility that Ripley entered the monastery while very young; see his gloss on p. 477.

Alchymy, Ripley notes: "I travailed truly through manie a Land, / Ere ever I might finde any that would tell it [the secret of the philosopher's stone] mee" ("Of Fermentation," st. 1); the "Epistle of King Edward the 4." speaks of the "Great secrets, which in farre countries I did learne" (st. 3) and mentions the University of Louvain (ll. 28–29). An autobiographical statement in the preface to the *Medulla Alchymiae* (*Marrow of Alchemy*), dated 1476, emphasizes the importance of the visit to Italy in the development of Ripley's knowledge of alchemy, attests to the nine years of travel, but does not state exactly when it took place.⁷ Further, an autobiographical reading of the second stanza of the *Cantilena Georgii Ripplaei* affirms the importance of the visit to Italy;⁸ and Ashmole notes, "[John] Leland saith truly, that he laid the foundation of his Studies in *Italy*, for there indeed he had the *blessing* first to see *Projection*" (*TCB*, 458).

1460s–70s(?): Visits Rhodes "and resided there for some time with the *Knights of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem . . . in the Isle of Malta* [an *English Gentleman* traveller] saw a *Record*, which declares that this Sir *George Ripley* gave yearely to those *Knights of Rhodes* £100000 towards maintaining the *war* (then on foot) against the *Turks*" (*TCB*, 458). Although it is uncertain whether Ripley's stay on Rhodes occurred within the nine years of Continental travel or was separate from it, his reputed

⁷English manuscript versions of the *Marrow of Alchemy* are entirely consistent on these points. For example, Sloane MS 2036 (ff.71–79) opens with the following statement to George Nevell, Archbishop of York, to whom the work is dedicated: "I being about to intreate to you most excellent Lordshipp of ye secretes of alkemy will endeavour my selfe to make open unto you the things wch wth great paine & travell by the space of nine yeares I have attained unto in Italy, & in the coaste thereof" (f.71). Statements virtually identical to this are found in Sloane MSS 3580B (f.136), 1423 (f.27), 319 (ff.10–18), 288 (f.72), 1524 (ff.13–39), and in the Latin copy of the "*Medulla Alchimiae / Georgii Riply / Canonici Bridlingtonensis / Robarte Smethes Booke*," dated November 20, 1599, and included in Sloane MS 1524 (ff.59–70). However, the unidentified source from which Thorpe quotes speaks of Ripley's twenty-year stay in Italy "in pursuit of the philosopher's stone" *Ripley: Its History and Antiquities*, 29).

⁸The stanza reads: "Through Roman Countreys as I once did passe / Where Mercuries Nuptiall Celebrated was, / And feeding stoutly (on the Bride-Groomes score) / I learn'd these Novelties unknowne before," from F. Sherwood Taylor, "George Ripley's Song," *Ambix*, 2 (1938): 177–81.

generosity to the Knights of Rhodes surely suggests that this stay followed the period of "Erronious Experiments."

1471(?): Ripley returns to England from travels on the Continent (and/or from the visit to Rhodes) and becomes—or more likely returns to his life as—a canon at the Augustinian priory at Bridlington in Yorkshire (*TCB*, 457; Thorpe, 30; Holmyard, 186). That "he might bid his farewell to the *World*, and wholly consecrate himselfe to *God*, and betake him to his private *Studies*, upon his returne into *England* he obtained an *Indulgence* of Pope Innocent the *eighth*, that for the future he might be 'Exempt from Claustrell Observance'" (*TCB*, 458). (This indulgence may instead have been granted near the end of Ripley's life; see 1488 below.)

1471: *Compound of Alchymy* written and dedicated to Edward IV, on the authority of Sloane MS 2598, f.71^v; Ashmole (*TCB*, 455); and the following Latin and English manuscript verses printed in the *TCB*, 193:

AN. DOM.1471.

*Explicit Alchimix Tractatus Philosophix,
Cujus Rypla George, Canonicus, Auctor erat;
Mille, quadringentis septuaginta unoq;
Annis qui scriptus compositusq; fuit.
Auctori lector præbe præce, quæso Iuvamen,
Illi purgamen leve post vitam ut sit Amen.*

Englished.

Thus heere the *Tract of Alchimy* doth end,
Whych (*Tract*) was by *George Ripley* Chanon pen'd;
It was Composed, Witt, and Sign'd his owne,
In *Anno* twice Seav'n hundred seav'nty one [i.e., 1471];
Reader! Assist him, make it thy desire,
That after Lyfe he may have gentle Fire. *Amen.*

1471: "Concordantiæ Guidonis et Raimundi" written (*DNB*), indicating Ripley's interest in alchemical writings attributed to Raymond Lull.

1476: Ripley in Italy (either as part of his nine years of Continental travel or a separate trip), where he writes the *Preface* to the *Medulla Alchymiae*, “Which he wrote Ann. Dom. 1476. and Dedicated to Geo:[rge] Nevell then Arch-Bishop of Yorke,” who had died 8 June 1476.⁹ William Salmon’s English translation states that “The Marrow of *Alchymie*, Written in *Latin* by *George Ripley*, Cannon of *Bridlington*, . . . [was] sent out of *Italy*, Anno 1476. To the Arch-Bishop of York.”¹⁰

1476: Ripley composes the *Cantilena* (Holmyard, 187), the second stanza of which refers to travels in Italy.

1477: Ripley made chamberlain by Pope Innocent VIII in Rome (Ferguson, 2:277).

1478: Ripley returns to England in possession of the secret of transmutation (Ferguson, 2:277).

1488: Ripley becomes a Carmelite in the monastery of St. Butolph near Boston in Lincolnshire. Bale, cited by Ashmole (*TCB*, 458), reports that upon his return to England, Ripley received an indulgence from Pope Innocent VIII that he might in the future be “Exempt from Claustrall Observance,” i.e., “discharged and freed from the burthen of the *Ceremonies* and *Observancy* of his Order.” Ashmole adds, “but in regard the *Chanons* admit no such things, he became a *Carmelite* [1488] in the *Monastery* of Saint *Butolph*. . . . And if you observe *Cambdens Map* of *Lincolnshire*, you shall see St. *Butolph* stands neere to *Boston*. So that in all likelihood this was the *place* of *Ripley’s Retirement*, where he continued an *Anchorite* untill his *Death*, and was there

⁹See the translated text in Ashmole, *TCB*, 389–92.

¹⁰William Salmon, *Medicina Practica: or, Practical Physick* (London, 1692), 643–44; this version of the *Preface* addressed to Nevell opens: “I shall endeavour Sir, to explicate, open, and make plain to you, the secrets of *Alchymie*, which I have attained to, by my Travels through *Italy*, and other Countries and Kingdoms for the space of Nine Years, drawing Forth, and Selecting the true Root, and Marrow of Nature (by a series of Experiences) from its most inward Recesses, and secret Habitation.”

Buried Anno 1490" (*TCB*, 458).¹¹

1490: Died. Ashmole reports burial at the monastery of St. Butolph, near Boston (*TCB*, 458), although C.H. Josten and the *DNB* report burial in Bridlington.¹²

1591: First printed edition of *The Compound of Alchymy* (London, T. Orwin; *STC* 21057).

1649: *Opera Omnia*, ed. Ludwig Combach, published, Kassel. Ashmole reports: "*Ludovicus Combachius* (who hath lately set forth divers of *Ripley's Works in Latin*) tells us that he then had in his hands these *Twelve Gates* rendred in most pure *Elegiaque verse*, by one *Nicholas May* upon the Command of the *Emperour Rudolph the second*, and that he could willingly have added it to that he *published*, (which was *translated* out of *English* into *Latine verse* by Sir *Edw: Kelley*) for the better understanding thereof, but that the *Copy* was none of his owne" (*TCB*, 456).

1652: *Compound* and other Ripley works printed in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*.

1678: Eirenaeus Philalethes's *Ripley Reviv'd* published.

¹¹Ashmole adds the following correction to Bale's account: "And whereas *Bale* saith he obtained *Pope Innocents* Indulgence upon his returne into *England*, and thereupon became a *Carmelite*, *An.* 1488. It is manifest from the aforesaid *Medulla*, that at the writing thereof, which was in 1476. (at least 12. yeares before the time *Bale* makes him to enter into that *Order*) he had this *Dispensation*, for so he tells the *Archbishop*: And if so, then it must be either *Sixtus* the fourth, or *Paul* the second (his *Predecessor*) that must grant it unto him" (*TCB*, 459). Thorpe states that while a Carmelite at Boston, Ripley "wrote no fewer than twenty-five books" (30).

¹²See the "Sepultura Georgii Ripley," in British Library Cotton MS Vitellius E.X, f.235^v, for an early drawing of his tomb, with alchemical symbols along the bottom. The location of the tomb is not identified. However, Josten reports the tomb's location as Bridlington, noting that Ashmole's sketch of the tomb in MS Ashm. 972, f.300^v, is subscribed as follows: "The Draught of George Riplies Monument at Bridlington in Yorkshire: taken from a Draught in a MS in Bibliotheca Cotton: [Vitellius] E.10 18.Nov: 1671. by E:A." (*Elias Ashmole*, 5 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966], 3:1228-1229).

One of the clearest indications that Ripley and his works were well known and respected in the two centuries following his death is the assiduous listing of his works by early commentators and antiquarians, particularly John Bale in the sixteenth century and John Pitseus and Elias Ashmole in the seventeenth. We have already noted that Ashmole's high regard for the canon of Bridlington was expressed through reprinting a generous selection of his English works in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* as well as in the commentary provided in the accompanying "Annotations and Discourses." In the latter, Ashmole performed further bibliographical service by attaching a selective list of Ripley's works drawn from the earlier records of Bale and Pitseus, and from Combachius's Latin edition of Ripley's collected works (1649). Because Ashmole's compilation gives us some sense of how the reception of Ripley's works evolved during the century prior to publication of the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, I am reproducing it as it originally appeared, following which I will add titles that Ashmole omitted. Ashmole begins by noting that Ripley "wrote divers *Bookes* worthy of perusing, but amongst those which *Bale* Registers [in the *Illustrium Majoris Britanniae Scriptorum Summarium*, 1548], I shall onely cull out these, viz.

1. *Compendium Alchimiae, seu Castellum Duodecim Portarum.*
2. *Concordantiae Guidonis & Raymundi.*
3. *Secreta Philosophorum.*
4. *Alcumistarum Misteria.*
5. *Artem brevem vel Clangorem.*
6. *Practicam Ceremonialem.*
7. *Dictata Ægri.*
8. *De Magia Naturali.*
9. *De lapide Philosophico, latine Tractatum rythmicum.*

All which *Pitts* recites [in the *Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis Tomus Primus*, 1619], and to them adds the following *workes*.

10. *Medullam Philosophiæ.*
11. *Pupillam Alchimiae.*

12. *Terram Terrarum.*
13. *Experimenta Philosophica.*
14. *De rerum temperaturis.*

What followes *Ludov: Combachius* has lately printed, and added to some of the aforementioned *Peeces*.¹³ \vs6pt15. *De Mercurio & lapide Philosophorum.*

16. *Philorcium Alchimistarum.*
17. *Clavis AuræPortæ.*
18. *Viaticum seu Varia Practica.*
19. *Accurtationes & practicæRaymundinæ.*
20. *Cantalena.*

And lastly take into the Number the small *Peeces* published in this *Theatrum. viz.* His

21. *Epistle to Edw. the fourth,* pag. 109.
22. *Vision.* pag. 374.
23. *Verses belonging to his Scrowle* Pag. 375.
24. *Preface to his Medulla,* 389.
25. *A short worke supposed to be his,* Pag. 393."

Ashmole was careful to note that his list of Ripley's works included only titles he had "culled out" from his sources; thus it is difficult to determine how many alchemical titles he chose not to include. Some indication of Ashmole's selectivity may be seen in the fact that his list of works included in Combachius's Latin edition (1649) contains only six titles, whereas twelve treatises actually appeared. Among works that frequently appear in

¹³In his *Opera Omnia* (Kassel, 1649), Ludovicus Combachius included the following:

1. *Liber 12. portarum.*
2. *Liber de Mercurio & Lapide philos.*
3. *Medulla Philosoph. Chemicæ.*
4. *Philorcium Alchymistarum.*
5. *Clavis aureæ portæ.*
6. *Pupilla Alchemiæ.*
7. *Terra terræ philosophicæ.*
8. *Concordantia Raymundi & Guidonis.*
9. *Viaticum seu varia practica.*
10. *Accurtationes & practic Raymundinæ.*
11. *Cantilena.*
12. *Epistola ad Regem Eduardum.*

both manuscripts and printed editions, *The Bosome-Book of Sir George Ripley* is a surprising omission, unless, of course, this collection of recipes for preparing the elixir is concealed under another title.¹⁴ While almost certainly some of Ripley's genuine alchemical works have disappeared, an enormous amount remains in manuscript; it is a greater misfortune that we have lost his contributions to other bodies of knowledge, for Ashmole, again citing earlier sources, states: "Tis further testified, that *He* alwayes either *Writ*, or *Learnt*, or *Taught* something; He was perfectly *learned* in *all* the liberall *Arts*, and well red in all manner of *Philosophy*; a most famous *Mathematitian*, a *Rhetoritian* and *Poet*" (TCB, 458).

Manuscript Versions of the *Compound of Alchemy*

Judging by the number of literary references and extant manuscripts, George Ripley and his writings, especially the *Compound of Alchemy*, were widely known and commanded considerable interest and respect well before this long alchemical poem was first printed in 1591. A survey of selected manuscripts reveals, for example, that the *Compound* was frequently copied out in its entirety, a practice that continued even after appearance of the printed edition. Moreover, as with other Ripley works, manuscript versions of the *Compound* prompted a large number of commentaries on the poem—"expositions," "elucidations," "unfoldings," and "expoundings"—in addition to many summaries, extracts, notes, and "axioms" based upon it. These versions of the *Compound* and commentaries were written in both verse and prose and made their appearance—always granting that manuscript dating is rarely an exact science—from about the time of the poem's composition into the Restoration. There is even a manuscript copy of a text entitled "Axioms of George Ripley" which dates from the eighteenth century.¹⁵ As will be

¹⁴This work appeared in *Collectanea Chymica: A Collection of Ten Several Treatises in Chymistry* (London, 1684); and was reprinted in A.E. Waite's edition, *Collectanea Chymica: Being Certain Select Treatises on Alchemy and Hermetic Medicine* (London: James Elliott, 1893).

¹⁵This is Sloane MS 3506, ff.47-52.

shown later in the introduction, in the seventeenth century this stream of Ripley manuscripts was joined by several new printed editions, such as the version of the *Compound* included in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (1652), along with several detailed commentaries, such as those written by Eirenaeus Philalethes (George Starkey). Thus, as is the case with much other alchemical writing, interest in Ripley's works seems to have increased with the advent of the new science.

The British Library's Sloane collection of manuscripts provides excellent evidence of this popularity, and the brief survey that follows is derived primarily from items in this collection, along with several others housed in the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, Glasgow University Library, and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Overall, the Sloane collection contains approximately seventy-five items to which Ripley's name is attached, and I single out for brief discussion only a few of special interest. Among these works are at least eight complete, or very nearly complete, versions of the *Compound*, the earliest of which—unusual in its precise dating—coincides closely with the time Ripley is thought to have completed his poem.¹⁶ Sloane MS 2598, ff.1–71^v, is written in a secretary hand, dated 1471, and subscribed with a sigil that may be derived from Ripley's name (f.71^v) or that of the scribe. It follows closely the ordering of the various sections of the *Compound* used in later manuscript and printed versions (although the 1591 edition adds dedicatory sections that are omitted in the manuscripts); these major parts are the prologue, preface, twelve gates, i.e., the body of the poem (ending on f.64^v), followed by the “Recapitulation” and “Erroneous Experiments.”

¹⁶See, for example, Sloane MSS 300, ff.1*–21; 1092, ff.16–44; 2174, ff.73b–85; 2198, ff.1–32; 2598, ff.1–71^v, 3170, ff.2–52; 3580, ff.140–166b; and 3809, ff.4–34. For descriptions of seven fifteenth-century manuscripts of the *Compound* in collections other than the British Library, see Dorothea Waley Singer, *Catalogue of Latin and Vernacular Alchemical Manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland Dating from before the XVI Century*, 3 vols. (Brussels: Maurice Lamertin, 1930), 2:551–53. Recently George R. Keiser has compiled an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary source material on Ripley in Albert E. Hartung, gen. ed., *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050–1500* (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1998), vol. 10, *Works of Science and Information*, ed. George R. Keiser, 3629–3797.

Generally, the text of Sloane MS 2598 and the verse form it adopts are very close to the 1591 printed edition, although one finds that the manuscript's spellings and punctuation are necessarily older and less consistent, that it includes many abbreviations and contractions absent in 1591, and that the manuscript contains occasional inversions and substitutions. For example, the manuscript's "ffor what is golde & silver saythe Avicine" (f.8) becomes in 1591, "For what is Sunne and Moone sayth *Avicen*" (Preface, st. 15); the first line in the 1591 Preface, "O High incomprehensible . . . Majestie," reads "incomparable" in the manuscript (f.4^v). In a very few places there are more substantive differences that might serve as arguments for textual emendations: for example, line 6, stanza 11, "Of Dissolution" in 1591 ("For there thou must abide by ninetie nights") reads "40" in this manuscript (f.20). Generally, however, such discrepancies are uncommon, and Sloane 2598 provides a version that is very close to the printed text of 1591.

Sloane MS 3580A is noteworthy for two reasons: among the few manuscripts that can be dated with precision, it stands closest in time to the 1591 edition; and, through information contained in the manuscript, we know more about its scribe and the circumstances of its copying than is the case with any other. The following note is carefully written, like the rest of the manuscript, in a tiny neat hand on pages bound into a printed book, the *Ars Chemica*:

Rypleyes booke of Alchymie, copied oute of a very false corrupt copy of a rugged hande, by me Tho. Potter. 1579. together wth ye marginall notes of ye said copie. Afterwards I gott a perfect true copy of thys boke of Geo. Ripleyes, in w^{ch} I founde his astronomycall tables also, . . . And by this said true copy, w^{ch} I gott 20.[?] 1580 I amended all false places of ye former copy. The saide true copy had very fewe margynall notes in yt, yea, none at all but suche as were written with a hande not like ye hande that ye text was wrytten wthall (f.140).

As a result of Thomas Potter's acquisition of this "perfect true copy" of Ripley's poem and his assiduous use of it, we have a

manuscript that is replete with interlinear corrections and additions, cancellations, and marginal annotations, which, along with modernized spelling and punctuation, serve to bring this manuscript text in close proximity to the 1591 edition. Potter's labors also included the meticulously drawn "astronomycall tables," referred to above, which are bound in at the end of the volume, thus serving to demonstrate that some manuscript copies of the *Compound* also included a visual, astronomical "figure," the counterpart of the engraved "Whee mentioned in his Worke" that appears in the 1591 edition.¹⁷

One important deviation from the printed edition must be noted, however, although one which is not unique to Sloane MS 3580A. On f.153, in the chapter "Of Putrefactyon," Potter writes: "Here lacke .25. staves, w^{ch} you shall fynde wrytten afterward in fol. 125. pag.2." The text of this chapter then skips ahead from stanza 20 to stanza 46. Thus the long satirical section included in the 1591 edition is "detached" from the rest of this gate and omitted, as it is in several other manuscript versions.¹⁸ Manuscript scribes, it would seem, were keenly aware that the presence of this extended passage—in which alchemical charlatanism is treated in a harshly satirical manner very reminiscent of its handling by English literary writers from Chaucer through Jonson—could do no credit either to Ripley or to the cause of alchemy.¹⁹ As a consequence they omitted it but, unlike Potter, without informing their readers that they were doing so.

¹⁷Corpus Christi Col. (Oxford) MS 172, f.42, includes another very careful drawing of the Ripley Wheel, done in the hand of Brian Twyne (1579?–1644), former owner of the manuscript, its occasional annotator, and archivist of Corpus Christi Col. Sloane MS 319, ff.21^v–22 also includes a version of "George Ripleyes wheele mentioned in his booke following;" although this design is not in the circular format of the 1591 figure, it, too, indicates that some manuscript copies did include a counterpart to the engraved design. It is especially useful for clarifying Ripley's discussion of "latitude" and "direction" near the end of the *Compound*.

¹⁸For other examples of omission, in whole or part, of the satirical section from the chapter on Putrefaction, see Sloane MSS 300, 1092, 2174, and 3809, and Oxford's Corpus Christi College MS 172. On the other hand, Sloane MS 3170, also dating from the 16th–17th centuries, includes this section.

¹⁹On this satirical tradition, see chaps. 2, 3, and 5 of my *Darke Hieroglyphicks: Alchemy in English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1996).

Sloane MSS 1092 and 2198, while not as precisely datable as the two manuscripts previously discussed, are additional examples of verse copies of the *Compound* dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both manuscripts are also interesting for their very extensive annotations, indicating that Ripley's works were not simply copied because of antiquarian interest and curiosity but because they were thought worthy of serious study. MS 1092, written in a large loose hand that usually allows inclusion of only three stanzas of rime royal per page, shows the poetic text to be completely surrounded by Latin marginalia, consisting of many cross-references, underlinings, and interlinear insertions. The sheer number of these annotations, all done in a small, tight secretary hand very different from that of the first scribe, threatens to engulf Ripley's words. Nonetheless, despite all of this evidence of serious intertextual study, MS 1092 is not among the more reliable versions of the *Compound* in that there is a scattering of omissions throughout the manuscript, the most notable being that of the entire satirical passage from the chapter on Putrefaction.²⁰ Like MS 1092, Sloane 2198, which dates from the sixteenth or quite possibly the seventeenth century, reveals problems with omissions and other forms of scribal inaccuracy, particularly beginning with the third and fourth "gates." It also contains evidence, I think, that its numerous corrections were made on the basis of the 1591 printed edition and, like Sloane 1092, it is heavily annotated, much of it in Latin.

A Ripley manuscript from the extraordinarily rich Ferguson collection of alchemical books and manuscripts at the University of Glasgow shows evidence of extensive study as well. MS Ferguson 117, "A Poem on Alchemy by Ripley, Canon of Bristol," dates from the seventeenth century and follows closely the 1591 printed edition. Like the two Sloane manuscripts just discussed, this manuscript is usefully annotated, although in dif-

²⁰For example, in Sloane 1092, f.16 (the first of this text) begins with st. 8 of the Preface and continues through st. 26; then the first "gate" on Calcination begins on f.18^v. "De Putrefactione" ends with st. 20, omitting the entire satirical section. Multiplication (chap. 11) breaks off abruptly at the end of st. 7 (f.42^v), and the text continues directly with the "Recapitulatio totius operis" on f.43, which ends on f.44. The Recapitulation is complete but is not followed by the "Erronious Experiments."

ferent ways. At times, the annotator will offer interpretations contrary to those presented in the *Compound*; for example, the statement on proportion in the seventh stanza "Of Calcination" is countered by reference to another English alchemical authority: "Bloomfield gives one of the Man, & three of the woman." The dangers described in ll. 4–5 of the eleventh stanza are reinforced through annotation: "Beware of a fflood." The complexities of the eighth stanza are somewhat elucidated by means of a marginal diagram, just as the seventh stanza, "Of Conjunction," is accompanied by a visual rendition of the so-called "triptative" conjunction. Stanza 8, "Of Exaltation," has a gloss that offers a detailed summary: "Observe here the manner of the Elements conversion, for in 21 Circulations the Elements are four times completely circulated." Most commonly, however, the annotations in MS Ferguson 117 take the form of brief guides to important topics or explanations of unfamiliar terms and concepts in the text, again indicating that Ripley's writings were highly prized on the grounds of their theoretical and practical information.²¹

As noted above, some Ripley manuscripts dating from the very late sixteenth or the seventeenth century contain evidence of having been corrected or even initially copied from the 1591 printed edition. Such appears to be the case with the British Library's Sloane MS 2174 which, although prose-like in appearance, actually consists of pairs of poetic lines "run-on" horizontally on the page rather than printed vertically, thus forming a 2, 2, 2, 1 pattern. Each of these short paragraphs thus forms a "stanza unit" that coincides closely with the original. Although generally the only punctuation provided is a medial comma between the two short poetic lines now occupying a single longer line of text, the sense is very close to the 1591 printed version. Judging by his extremely cramped handwriting, it would appear that the scribe may have developed this prose-like format in or-

²¹A companion Glasgow manuscript, Ferguson 58, bears similar evidences of close study, including an index on the final page. Utility is also emphasized through the presence of many alchemical and medical receipts (in Latin, Dutch, French, and English) copied into the same manuscript and an account, in English, of experiments made on 20 April and 3 June 1602.

der to save space, an effect also aided by omission of the satirical section (sts. 21–46) of the chapter on Putrefaction.

Conclusive evidence that the 1591 printed edition of the *Compound* sometimes served as the copy text for subsequent manuscript versions is provided by Corpus Christi College (Oxford) MS 172, ff.7–42. Part of an extremely large collection of papers once owned by Brian Twyne (1579?–1644), Corpus Christi College archivist, and now housed at the College, this manuscript reproduces the 1591 title page on its first page.²² While this manuscript omits most of the dedicatory poems included in the 1591 edition, it contains a note listing the contents. Among the parts included are the dedicatory epistle to Queen Elizabeth, Ripley's vision "about a toade," and, most curiously, the *Titulus Operis* "wherein ye Author acknowledgeth that he attayned this skill after his living at a place called Ixninge in Italy." It is signed at the bottom of the verso of the first leaf: "Helias Artista, Nunc Disquisitio Aug. 1613." "Elias Artista" is a common alchemical pseudonym, appearing especially in reformist, millenarian contexts in early modern alchemical treatises.²³

This very limited survey of Ripley manuscripts found in three collections reveals several important things concerning how this fifteenth-century alchemical writer and his works were perceived and received in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Sloane and Ferguson collections demonstrate, first of all, that Ripley's *Compound* was widely available in manuscript before it was first printed; the Corpus Christi manuscript provides conclusive evidence that manuscript copies continued to be produced—for whatever reasons—from the 1591 printed edition itself. While these manuscript versions differ widely as to time of transcription, physical appearance and condition, orthography, and scribal accuracy and understanding of the material, the majority are reasonably complete and accurate when compared with the first printed edition. Although the amount and format of the

²²I am grateful to Christine Butler of the Corpus Christi College library for much useful information on Twyne and his manuscript papers; see also the *DNB*.

²³See, for example, *The Second Part of Miraculum Mundi, In which is described the Magnificent Coming of Elias the Artist*, included in the *Works of . . . John Rudolph Glauber . . . Translated into English by Christopher Packe* (London, 1689), 221–42.

prefatory material varies, these manuscripts present reasonably full and accurate versions of the twelve gates themselves. The major exception is the common omission, from the chapter on Putrefaction, of the satirical section on alchemical charlatanism, a section that is, in fact, present in the 1591 edition. If to these complete (or very nearly complete) versions of the *Compound* one adds the extremely large number of extant partial versions, extracts, summaries, and commentaries,²⁴ one can only conclude that Ripley was the subject of great interest during the two hundred years and more following his death. That this interest was often informed and critical is also evidenced by the sheer number of commentaries on the *Compound* and the amount of annotation present in several manuscript copies of Ripley's poem. Thus, the time was ripe for the appearance of the *Compound* in print; and this, in turn, would be followed in the next century by a number of new commentaries which stimulated even greater critical interest in the Canon of Bridlington and his works.

The 1591 Printed Edition

The *Stationers Register* entry for 12 May 1591 reads:

Thomas Orwin/ Entred for his cotype under th[e h]andes of
the Archbishop of Canterbury and master warden Cawood,
a book intituled, *The Compound of Alcumye* [i.e. Alchemy]
. . . vj^d²⁵

The few known details of Orwin's personal life and the titles of books that he printed at his shop "in Paternoster Row over against the Checker" provide no evidence as to why he chose to print Ripley's long alchemical poem 100 years following the author's death. Orwin began his career in the London book trade as a printer's apprentice, was "admytted a freeman of this Cumpanye" 5 May 1581, and eventually became a Master

²⁴Examples include Sloane MSS 299, ff.43b-50; 633, ff.2-13b; 2567, ff.23-33; 3631, ff.51-63; 3633, f.17; 3757, ff.31b-34, and 3758, ff.26-38.

²⁵Edward Arber, ed., *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 A.D.*, 5 vols. (London, 1875-77), 2:582. Hereafter *SR*.

Printer.²⁶ According to entries in the *Stationers Register*, his business flourished between 1587–93 and included, among many other types of books, collections of sermons, prayers, and meditations, *A ballade of the strange whippes whiche the Spanyardes had prepared [for] Englishemen and women* (entered in 1588), works entitled *The Complaint of Tyme* and *The Monarchie of the Greekes*, and—to be noted later—Peter Bales’s *The Wrytinge Schoolemayster*.²⁷ It appears that Orwin did something to incur the strictures of the Stationers Company, resulting in interruption of his business, and prompting a subsequent apology. An item dated 30 August 1591 states:

Archbishop Whitgift to the Master and Wardens of the Company of Stationers approving of (Thomas) Orwin’s acknowledgement of his fault and repeating a request that his press and printing stuff be redelivered to him and that he be suffered to follow his trade freely so long as he behaves himself.²⁸

Orwin’s death must have occurred before 25 June 1593 because an entry in the *Stationers Register* for that date refers to his widow Jo[a]ne, “late wife of Thomas Orwin citizen and staconer of London deceased.” She subsequently operated the business and was taking on apprentices at least until 24 June 1598.²⁹

If investigation of Orwin and his business fails to suggest reasons for the long-delayed printing of Ripley’s *Compound*, relevant

²⁶*SR* 3:702, which reports that in this position Orwin succeeded John Kingston, whose widow he had married.

²⁷For a complete list of works associated with Orwin’s press, see A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1475–1640*, vol. 3, *A Printers’ and Publishers’ Index* by Katharine F. Pantzer (London: Bibliographical Society, 1991), 130.

²⁸Quoted from W.W. Greg, ed., *A Companion to Arber* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 47, item 142. *SR* 1:555 points to actual confiscation of Orwin’s press; this entry dated from 15 July 1591–15 July 1592, states: “Item paid for bringinge Orwins presse and l[ett]res [type] to ye hall . . . vj^d. On the possibility that Orwin’s difficulties may have stemmed from his publication of works sympathetic to Roman Catholicism, see R.B. McKerrow, gen. ed., *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers . . . 1577–1640* (London Bibliographical Society, 1910), 208. It is, I think, extremely difficult to find evidence of Catholic sympathies among the works assigned to Orwin and listed in the *Stationers Register*.

²⁹See *SR*, 2:186, 226; also *STC* 3:130, which notes that Joan Orwin had previously been married to London printers John Kingston and George Robinson.

explanations are closer at hand in the case of the work's editor or "setter foorth." The ornate title page of the 1591 edition (see p. lix) informs us that it has been "*Set foorth by Raph Rabbards Gentleman, studious and expert in Archemicall Artes.*" It is both curious and unfortunate that Rabbards (or Rabbardes) seems to exist only within the very limited context of this edition. He is mentioned nowhere else in the *Short-Title Catalogue* or, to the best of my knowledge, in any other listing of Renaissance books or in alchemical contexts. However, from the prefatory materials included in the volume, it is possible to gain some insights into this interesting and shadowy figure. The most valuable source of such information is his lengthy—and, by modern standards, excessively flattering—Epistle Dedicatory to Queen Elizabeth, from which we learn the following. He writes as one who has been a citizen of England "these threescore yeares and more," thus placing his birthdate in about 1530 or slightly earlier. Rabbards also speaks from a staunchly Protestant point of view that keenly reflects the political and religious anxieties that marked English history from the time of Queen Mary's reign (1553–58), when he would have been in his mid- to late 20s. He opens, for example, by referring to the reign of Edward VI (that "peerelesse Prince . . . your MAJESTIES Brother, of most rare and famous memorie") as the time when "the plant of infallible truth of the Gospell" was first planted and which has now "sprung up to a perfect tree of such full groath, that the branches thereof have spread themselves long and wide . . . mauger the Divell, the Pope, & the King of Spaine." Elizabeth's preservation throughout this "time of late domesticall persecution, from the mercilesse hands of those butcherly murtherers," was a miracle wrought by God.

Throughout, Rabbards writes familiarly of the torture, bloodshed, exile, and martyrdom ("the burning heate of the sharpe persecutions") that supporters of Elizabeth and the Protestant cause faced during the Marian period and also of the numerous plots and conspiracies against Elizabeth ("the manifold imminent dangers") that continued throughout most of the century. This familiarity with religious and social persecution and upheaval has been gained at high cost and results from Rabbards'

personal experience during the “timely and happy alteration of the state”) that brought the reign of Bloody Mary to an end and saw the ascent of Elizabeth (1558):

I tasted (amongst the rest of such as then honoured, revered, and of bounden duetie loved your MAJESTIES rare vertues) so great extremitie of imprisonment, & other hard usage many wayes, as scaping with life, (by timely and happy alteration of the state), I felt long after the paines of those torments, whereby my health in xx. yeares after was extreemly empayred;

While there is, I think, absolutely no reason to doubt the truth of Rabbards' statements that he has borne the physical pain of his imprisonment for twenty years, i.e., into the 1570s when he himself is in his 'forties, it is disappointing that he will only hint, sometimes contradictorily, at the nature of his role(s) in these historical events. In fact, he appears to have been caught up in three different courses of action, perhaps—but not necessarily—undertaken at different points in his adult life. First, Rabbards often emphasizes both his closeness to political events and the secrecy of the parts he played in them: for example, he is acutely aware of the threats against Elizabeth, Protestantism, and the English state posed by Spain and Roman Catholicism, as embodied in Mary Tudor (daughter of Catharine of Aragon), her husband Philip II, and “all their fraternities, consorts, leaguers, and adherents, or other their Ministers, spreaders and maintainers of lies.” He speaks of “the tyrannicall attempts, and secret divelish practises” of Elizabeth's enemies; or, again, of being “so farre privie of some of the most mischievous intended conspiracies, as for my faithfull indeavours by such rare secrete services as were by mee effected to prevent the same.” Although we cannot determine exactly what these “rare secrete services” were, it may be that Rabbards' words should be taken quite literally. Looking back upon the tumultuous events of the previous forty years from the *relative* stability of post-Armada England and from a time when it was perhaps possible to be somewhat less guarded in what one said,³⁰ it may be that Rabbards is here hint-

³⁰I am not suggesting that the 1590s were without anxiety and threats to stability,

ing at previous employment under William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and Principal Secretary of State Walsingham in the Elizabethan secret service. He may have been involved in countering the numerous plots directed against the life of Elizabeth throughout her reign or been otherwise part of what has recently been called the Elizabethan "culture of surveillance," the extensive use of espionage, counter-espionage, and militarism, established by the Cecilian regime.³¹

One other piece of evidence may point toward Rabbards's association with this highly developed system of political intelligence. The third of the five commendatory poems prefixed to Rabbards's edition was written by Peter Bales ("In commendation of the Author, and his twelve gates: Orderly set down in the 12. last verses"). And in his address "To the indifferent Reader" at the close of the volume, Rabbards again refers to Bales, this time in a more personal vein. He asks that

if in reading hereof thou shalt note any fault in matter or forme, that thou wilt curteously note the same and send it unto me, or the house of *Peter Bales* in the Olde Bayly, to bee corrected uppn the next generall impression.

The obvious implication of this statement is that Rabbards and Bales were closely acquainted: friends, associates in the printing trade, or at least two men who saw each other frequently enough so that printing errors passed along to Bales would reach Rabbards for correction. Bales's authorship of the commendatory poem may therefore have been nothing more than a gesture of

particularly since discovery of the Babington plot and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587 made the question of the succession more acute than ever. Many of the plots against Elizabeth's life in the early 1590s, such as the Roderigo Lopez plot, which led to his execution in 1594, Capt. Jacques' plot of 1593/4, the one which involved the confession of Hugh Cahill (1593/4), and the later Essex rebellion (1601) had implications for the succession.

³¹The phrase is that of Curtis Breight in *Surveillance, Militarism and Drama in the Elizabethan Era* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1996). The standard work on Walsingham is Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), esp. 2:chap. 11; see also the recent studies by Alan Haynes, *Invisible Power: The Elizabethan Secret Services, 1570-1603* (Bath, Avon: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1992), and Alison Plowden, *The Elizabethan Secret Service* (Hemel Hempstead, Herts.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

friendship.

However Bales was quite well known in his time as a hand-writing expert, teacher, and author who also had connections with the world of Elizabethan espionage. His name has survived on the basis of his book, *The Writing Schoolemaster: Conteyning three Bookes in one; The first, teaching Swift writing; The second, True writing; The third, Fair Writing*, published in 1590 by Thomas Orwin, who, as we have just seen, printed Rabbards's edition of Ripley's *Compound* the following year.³² According to the account of Bales's life in the *DNB*, Walsingham was his patron, and his hand-writing expertise was crucial in discovering the Babington plot. This connection is confirmed by Alan Haynes, who notes that Thomas Phelippes "may have been tutored in the clandestine arts by the writing master Peter Bales who in the 1570s and 1580s was at court, but without a secure post. A master of microscopic penmanship, he was also a deviser of ciphers employed by [Sir Christopher] Hatton and Walsingham."³³ His skills in devising and decoding ciphers, in forging the handwriting of others, and in writing minutely would surely have been useful skills in the Elizabethan secret service, a point which Bales himself emphasizes in the Preface to *The Writing Schoolemaster*:

For men of state, what maie better pleasure you than Brachy-graphie? For by it you maie swiftlie and secreatlle decipher your intelligences: and by seeking to enrich this Arte, drawe such formes of writing, as the curious Decipherer maie sooner breake his braine, than reach to your meaning. (B3)

Thus if we cannot state with certainty that Rabbards was himself a member of this intelligence community, he at least had acquaintances who were.

The second of Rabbards's types of activity to which the Dedication to Queen Elizabeth refers, though clearly less secretive

³²On Bales, see the *DNB*; *The Writing Schoolemaster* has been reprinted in facsimile by the Da Capo Press (Amsterdam, NY, 1969) in the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* series. This work is dedicated to Sir Christopher Hatton, and like Rabbards' edition, is prefaced by a Latin complimentary poem by Thomas Newton.

³³See Haynes, *Invisible Power*, 13.

than the first, is also mysterious. In discussing the forty years of service that he has performed, he refers to discovering "many other most commendable exercises and inventions of so warlike Engines, founde out divers devises of rare service, both for Sea and land, some whereof . . . I have performed and made the use thereof knownen unto many my honourable, skilfull and experienced good friendes at home, and to some Princes beyonde the Seas." In a later passage, he refers to his "many studious inventions, whereunto I have bent my minde as well for the service of my countrie." Again, Rabbards is silent as to the exact nature of these inventions, although they appear to have been used in land and naval warfare and distributed both at home and abroad. While it is dangerous to attempt to read too much into Rabbards's somewhat enigmatic prose, it is possible that his repeated emphasis on military power and peacetime preparedness (what "every dutifull subject and good Patriott ought [to do] in time of tranquillitie") was a response to the recent threat and defeat of the Spanish Armada: "the strange and miraculous Heroicall Actions both martiall & politick which have been . . . beyond all expectation performed with singuler government and incomparable magnanimitie." Whatever the cause, Rabbards finds peacetime training in the military arts essential to the preservation of civil government.

For all of Rabbards's noble rhetoric and devotion to Queen and country, he does at times interject a sense of weariness and bitterness that results from his apparent victimization by those who have somehow profited from the devices that he has invented ("ignoraunt persons having by chaunce light on some Modules or Patternes of small importance imperfect, have vainely arrogated the invention unto themselves"). The exact nature of Rabbards's grievance is once again uncertain though it appears to have resulted from the misuse—through ignorance—of the appropriated devices. This, in turn, has led to another cause of despair: the "losse of many yeares spent unprofitably in a laborinth of law suites, and private contention with men of verie great abilitie, and better friended than my selfe."

The concluding section of the dedication to Queen Elizabeth contains the most interesting and illuminating commentary on

alchemy and Rabbards's views of the text that he is publishing. Among his "many studious inventions," are some which have resulted from experiments in distillation:

Looking withall into some parte of the rare inscrutable secrets of naturall Philosophie, and falling sometimes to the chargeable [i.e., burdensome and expensive], paynefull, and fruiteles practise thereof, by distillation, and other transmutation of Plants, Hearbs, Stones and Mineralls of all sortes: ayming at that marke, which many learned and greater Clearks than my selfe have shot at, and yet missed; I have notwithstanding by the way light (to my singuler contentment) on infinite rare conclusions, both profitable, pleasant, and serviceable.

Although he has sought the philosopher's stone and attempted to transmute imperfect metals into gold or concoct the elixir, his efforts have been futile; Rabbards—like so many alchemists throughout history—has had to content himself with the secondary fruits of experimentation, the "infinite rare conclusions." However, a greater cause for regret is the long interruption of alchemical experimentation that his legal difficulties have brought about. Now after ten years of expensive litigation, he has given up his suit and can return to alchemical experimentation, his "delectable studies and serviceable exercises." It is in this context of lost time, advancing age, withdrawal from the world of practical affairs, and the desire to perform some act of service to the State, that Rabbards hopes to present to the Queen, "some rare Present by experiments *Chimicall* or *Martiall*, such as hitherto hath not been performed by any other," more precisely the Ripley edition that he has "set forth."

At this point in the dedication, Rabbards adopts the conventional rhetoric of alchemy in asserting the clarity and truthfulness of Ripley's work and its efficacy in leading the earnest practitioner to success in attaining the philosopher's stone:

I am bolde to publish this rare worke of learned *Ripley* under your *M A J E S T I E S* protection for the instruction and direction of all studentes, and lovers of the secreat Mysteries of naturall Philosophie; delivering most compendiously the hidden Arte and high Myserie of making the Philosophers Stone,

(sought for by many thousandes in all ages, but founde of very fewe, and they such as rapte with the excellency thereof, have in contempt of the worlde, retired themselves from common societie, keeping the same most secret to themselves, esteeming the world not worthy of so precious a Jewell.

The dedication ends with Rabbards's boast that if he—guided by Ripley's *Compound* and other native English alchemical authorities, including the contemporary John Dee—had had opportunity to spend the past seven years in Her Majesty's "manifold fruitlesse still-houses" they would not have remained unproductive.

In the brief, following dedicatory letter "*To the right Honourable, Worshipfull, and worthy Gentlemen of England, and other learned & industrious Students in the secrets of Philosophie,*" Rabbards explains his particular interest in the *Compound* and how he has come to print it. His statements here closely support earlier ones concerning both his experimental interests in alchemy and desire to perform a valuable service for his country. The Ripley manuscript, he tells us, has been in his possession "these fortie yeares for many secrete uses" (i.e., since about 1550), during which it has been "corrected by the most learned of our time." Now that he is approaching old age, "and otherwise hyndred with troublesome suites in law, which constrained me to discontinew these and such other commendable practises, for the benefite and defence of my Prince and Countrie," he has decided to publish it. This action is all the more urgent because "there are but a few copies left, and those for the most parte corrupted by negligence, or mistaking of ignorant writers thereof." It is strange, he notes, "that so excellent a Monument as this most rare and learned worke of *George Ripley*, should so long lye hidden in obscurities, & passe from hand to hand a hundreth and fiftie yeares without utter defacing; seeing that many notable works published, have in far shorter time perished." In determining to publish Ripley's *Compound*, Rabbards is then consciously preserving a rare and important treatise that he himself has put to "secrete uses" for forty years; not only has this manuscript miraculously escaped destruction, it has been corrected by ex-

perts in the field, and is thus worthy of presentation, in printed form, to his learned countrymen for their benefit.

Writing at the dawn of the age of Bacon and scientific experimentalism, was Rabbards a confirmed believer in the possibility of alchemical transmutation? The question cannot, of course, be answered with certainty, but there is evidence that his thinking is representative of that of many alchemical experimenters during the early modern era. He is entirely conventional in admitting that discovery of the secret of transmutation is extremely rare: "And if one among tenne thousand can hitt the marke, (whereat the whole worlde hath aymed)," but this is not sufficient cause to abandon the search. Like many alchemical authors of the time, Rabbards is also motivated by the possibility of discovering, while in the process of working on the *opus magisterium*, "many things both pleasant and profitable, divers wayes serviceable to Kingdomes, States, and Common weales." Thus, he is aware that experimental by-products also have value.

Ripley and Pseudo-Lullian Alchemy

The writings of George Ripley have long been considered as reflecting, directly or indirectly, the thought of Raymond Lull (b. ca. 1232–36–d. 1315) or his followers. Ripley has in fact generally been regarded as the leading popularizer, in late medieval England,³⁴ of the alchemical philosophy attributed to this influential Spanish philosopher and theologian, mystic, and missionary to Islam. Modern scholarship has definitively answered long-standing questions about the authenticity of Lull's "alchemical canon" to the extent that, in the words of the leading authority on the subject, "None of the alchemical writings traditionally attributed to Lull can now be plausibly ascribed to him."³⁵ This conclusion is based on Lull's negative statements

³⁴See, for example, Robert Steele's account of Ripley's life in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and E.J. Holmyard's *Alchemy* (Harmondworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1957), 187.

³⁵See Michela Pereira, *The Alchemical Corpus Attributed to Raymond Lull*. Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts XVIII (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1989), 1. For the fascinating history of the extent and formation of this pseudo-Lullian alchemical corpus, see Pereira's general introduction to this catalogue. Much useful

concerning alchemy in his genuine writings and, more persuasively, on the dating of the "alchemical" manuscripts themselves: with one exception, all date from a time following Lull's death in 1315. Thus they are "pseudo-Lullian" forgeries fathered upon Lull by followers both early and late and include the extremely popular *Codicillus*, *Testamentum*, and *Liber de secretis naturae*. Questions of attribution were not, of course, widely recognized or enquired into in the fourteenth century, least of all by Lull's devoted followers—amongst whom some of the spurious tracts originated—or by people like George Ripley in the fifteenth. It was enough to know that Lull's name, however erroneously or fraudulently, was attached to them; the result was that as this corpus increased in size and popularity, Lull himself came to be mythologized as a leading alchemical authority.³⁶

More to the present purpose, of the rapidly growing influence of pseudo-Lullian alchemy in England during the time of George Ripley, Michela Pereira has written:

It would therefore seem that the initial transmission of pseudo-Lullian alchemy to England occurred at the beginning of the fifteenth century after the formation of a distinct corpus explicitly attributed to Lull. It is, in fact, in England that we find: the oldest known manuscripts of these works: the first organized miscellanies of pseudo-Lullian writings (MSS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 112 and Yale, Beinecke Library, Mellon Collection 12); the persistence of a somewhat less extensive corpus than that found in continental manuscripts of the first century of alchemical pseudo-Lullism; and the popularization of pseudo-Lullian alchemical doctrines

information on the topic is also included in F. Sherwood Taylor, *The Alchemists* (London: Heinemann, 1951), 109–22.

³⁶Frances Yates, while agreeing that the alchemical works ascribed to Lull are spurious, suggests that there is something in his genuine works that could lead followers to attribute alchemical writings to him; she states, "there are passages in the *Tractatus* which show that the use of its method is envisaged in application to astrological medicine, as a scientific method of calculating elemental complexions in man, and in medicines made from plants, in relation to the stars. Is its use also envisaged in connexion with elemental complexions in metals and other substances? That is to say, could it be used not only in astrological medicine but also in alchemy?" (*Lull & Bruno: Collected Essays*, vol. 1 [London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982], 28).

by George Ripley in the 1470s. Finally, there is the legend of Lull's visit to England at Abbot Cremer's invitation, which may be an indication, albeit fictional, of this same trend.³⁷

Since the genuine works of Lull had not yet made their way into England (they were translated into Latin in 1445), it was all the easier for pseudo-Lullian writings to be accepted as authentic.³⁸ And what were the distinctive qualities and characteristics of such writings? What marks an alchemical treatise as "pseudo-Lullian"? Charts and diagrams abound in treatises of Lullian provenance, typically combining intricate illustration with "alchemical alphabets," obscure text encoded with symbolic numbers and letters correlated with the names of alchemical materials and processes. In these respects the pseudo-Lullianists appropriated, for occult purposes, features that were present in the Spanish philosopher's authentic works. Lynn Thorndike has noted that *typically* "Lull's diagrams and mechanical devices included a tree, intersecting triangles, and concentric circles divided into compartments, of which one rotated something like the planets in the signs while the other remained stationary like the sphere of the fixed stars."³⁹ In the works of Lull's followers, these visual features were intended not only to encode the secrets of alchemy but to serve as mnemonic devices of the sort common in Renaissance books on the art of memory. Yet, despite these apparent similarities between visual aspects of pseudo-Lullian alchemical treatises and other traditions of alchemical illustration, there are also important differences. Taylor offers the following generalization:

³⁷Pereira, 23–4.

³⁸Pereira, 24.

³⁹*History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1923–58), 2:865. Taylor notes that Lull "invented an extraordinary scheme for a mechanical system of logic whereby the premises of theological propositions could be mechanically arranged in various orders by a machine or by complicated tables and so prove themselves true" (110). For illustrations, see Taylor, pp. 112, 119, and the several excellent plates in Yates, *Lull and Bruno*. For discussion of the alchemical tree symbol, with special attention to pseudo-Lullian examples, see Urszula Szulakowska, "The Tree of Aristotle: Images of the Philosophers' Stone and Their Transference in Alchemy from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century," *Ambix*, 33:2/3 (November 1986), 53–77.

But the most interesting thing about them is that, unlike most alchemical works, they are not a mosaic of quotations from earlier authors but a consistent logical work, and that they have very little in them which is allegorical or deliberately obscure. The picturesque array of green lions and tail-eating dragons, the red man and his white wife, the king and queen, the gold and silver trees play in them but the smallest part."⁴⁰

These allegorical and symbolic motifs are very common in Ripley's *Compound* as in his other writings; yet, as we shall see, he also expresses profound respect for the writings that he ascribes simply to "Raymond." Ripley never betrays any doubts as to the authenticity of the Spaniard's writings, and at times refers to works by name which are now known to be part of the pseudo-Lullian corpus.

In my commentary on the *Compound* I will indicate the half dozen or so specific references to Lull and also possible borrowings of pseudo-Lullian ideas that, as Pereira has noted, were placing England in the forefront of such studies during Ripley's lifetime. It will be seen that several of Ripley's key ideas and topics of discussion are ones which he attributes to "wise Raymond." In order to broaden the context slightly, in the remainder of this section of the introduction I will consider briefly Lullian references that appear in Ripley's *Medulla Alchymiae* or *The Marrow of Alchymie*, translated into English from the Latin by William Salmon and included in his *Medicina Practica or, Practical Physick* (1692). This popular work, which Ripley dedicated in 1476 to George Nevill, archbishop of York, has much in common with the *Compound*, and for this reason I have made generous use of it in my commentary on Ripley's poem.

In the *Marrow*, Ripley alludes to or quotes from writings ascribed to Lull more often than to any other alchemical authority; in fact, the number of such references exceeds the combined total of those to Morienus, Guido Montanor, Roger Bacon, Avicenna, and Geber, all of whom are cited in the *Compound*. Moreover, Ripley resorts to Lullian passages when it appears that he is most in need of authoritative evidence to prove an important

⁴⁰Taylor, 111.

statement or drive home a crucial argument. In the following few examples, which will have to stand for many, the italicized words are those presumably derived from Lull; those in Roman type are Ripley's. In answer to the question, "In what thing is our Gold [i.e., alchemical gold] to be found?," Ripley replies:

Is it not in Mercury, which is called Quick or living Gold? *Raymandus saith, He that will reduce Quick-Gold into thin water, must make it, doe it, and Work it by its contrary. For saith he, Quick or living Gold, has in its self, four Natures, and four humours or Elements. And therefore saith he, if you putrefie its Cold with its Hot, and its Dry with its Moist, you shall not only have the Humidity of all Bodies, but you shall have a Menstruum, which will dissolve Argent Vive for ever.*⁴¹ (645-6)

The concept of the "menstruum" or dissolvent is important in the *Compound*, as is the origin of precious metals from a mysterious mineral water. Both works also give considerable attention to quick-silver, or mercury, as a prime ingredient of the philosopher's stone, as in "XII. To the same thing *Raymundus* assents, where he saith then have you that *Argent Vive*, which is called Ours; and so it is indeed one of Our *Argent Vive*, altho' the intent of the same Philosopher in *Libro Animae Artis Transmutatoriae*, Cap.2, was touching another more noble and more excellent Water."⁴²

Material from the *Marrow* is frequently useful in elucidating obscure concepts and terms in the *Compound*, such as the variety of alchemical fires or the meaning of "Adrop" (or "Adrup") in the following passage: "*This Leprous Gold the Philosophers call, Adrop, or Adrup, which Gold is the Philosophers Lead,*" to which Ripley adds, in accordance with pseudo-Lullian confidence in the possibility of transmutation, "and wisely search out the Secret

⁴¹All references are to William Salmon's *Medicina Practica: or, Practical Physick* (London, 1692), 645-6. This volume of practical medical cures also includes Salmon's translations out of Hermes Trismegistus, Kalid, Geber, Artefius, Flamel, Roger Bacon, and Ripley, suggesting the close proximity of medicine, alchemy, and hermetic philosophy even in late seventeenth-century England.

⁴²This appears to be an alternate title of the *Compendium animae transmutationis metallorum*, no. I.12 in Pereira's catalogue of the pseudo-Lullian corpus (68).

thereof, [and] you may in the space of thirty days perform the Work of the Philosophers Stone.”⁴³ In other instances, Ripley simply repeats, without benefit of definition, obscure terms from his source, as in “*Raymundus* saith, it were better, or safer, to eat the Eyes of a *Basalisk*, than that Gold, which is made with the Fire against Nature.”⁴⁴ Thus discussion often proceeds *ignotum per ignotius*, explaining the obscure by the equally (or more) obscure.

In conclusion, in the *Marrow* Ripley reveals close familiarity with his pseudo-Lullian sources, the most important of which appear to be, in addition to those already mentioned, the *Clavis* (i.e., the *Clavicula secreta*), the *Codicil* (i.e., the *Codicillus*) and the “practical Alphabet,” probably an alternate title for the *Liber secreti secretorum*.⁴⁵ He uses these sources as a skillful rhetorician—not as a skillful, practicing scientist—drawing upon specific chapters and verses to “prove” an argumentative point. He relies far more heavily on what he no doubt considered highly reputable written sources than on practical experience in the laboratory; yet he is also aware that these sources alone have not led to alchemical success:

But this thing [the Unctuous Distilled Spirit] being rare in our parts, as well as other Countries, *Guido Montanor* found out another Unctuous humidity, which swims upon other Liquors, which humidity proceeds from Wine, which *Raymundus*, & *Arnoldus* knew, with some others, but they taught not how it should be obtained.⁴⁶

The Compound of Alchymy in the Seventeenth Century

In addition to many manuscript copies and the first printed edition of 1591, seventeenth-century printed versions of the *Compound* and other works by Ripley demonstrate that he was known

⁴³*Marrow*, 650–51.

⁴⁴*Marrow*, 656.

⁴⁵These are entries I.9, I.10, and I.49 in Pereira’s catalogue (pp. 67, 80).

⁴⁶*Marrow*, 678.

and respected in England even as Francis Bacon, the new philosophy, and eventually the Royal Society were calling into doubt the theory and practice of alchemy and related bodies of knowledge. Surprisingly, as the seventeenth century progressed there is a notable increase of interest in Ripley, as in a number of other alchemical authors, such as Paracelsus. The *Compound* next appears in print in 1652 in Elias Ashmole's celebrated collection of English alchemical poetry, the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, where it is placed among "Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous *English Philosophers*, who have written the *Hermetique Mysteries* in their owne Ancient Language."⁴⁷ Among the hermetic authorities whose poems Ashmole includes are Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Thomas Norton, Ripley's contemporary, probable pupil, and author of *The Ordinall of Alchimy*. In the "Annotations and Discourses" that conclude the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, Ashmole provides some instructive comments on editing the text of Ripley's poem, comments which also indicate its popularity in the early seventeenth century. After noting the earlier Rabbards edition, Ashmole states that he had compared it

with severall other *Manuscript Copies*, amongst which I happily met with one written neere about the time that *Ripley* lived, (and in these *Streames of Learning* the more clearest and without the least of *Mixture* is to be found nearest the *Spring-head*;) the which I most relyed upon. Yet where they differ, the *Reader* (if this *Copy* please not) may make use of the former.⁴⁸

Ashmole's following statement, "it appeares at the end of this *Worke*, that it was written in the yeare 1471," suggests that the manuscript he regarded as especially authoritative may have been Sloane 2598,⁴⁹ which, as previously noted, is dated 1471 on

⁴⁷From the title page of the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*.

⁴⁸*Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, 455.

⁴⁹Although my comparison of these two versions is not exhaustive, it can be said that the Sloane MS 2598 text is extremely close to that included in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, and in many subtle ways closer to Ashmole's version than to 1591. Sloane 2598 is also somewhat unusual among manuscripts in that it includes the entire satirical section in its chapter on Putrefaction, a fact that points toward its

its final folio and is signed with a sigil that may be derived from the name “Ripley” or that of the scribe. Further, because 1471 is the date usually assigned to the *Compound*’s completion, and this is one year beyond the dates of the confessed unreliability of Ripley’s writings (i.e., 1450–70), Ashmole concludes: “So that this *Treatise* of the 12. *Gates* being wrote the yeare after, is unquestionably to be *relyed upon*, because pen’d from a grounded *experimental Practise*, as himself testifies in his *Admonition*.”⁵⁰

The text of the *Compound* that Ashmole provides, although including all of the components and close in meaning to the 1591 edition, exhibits important differences in phrasing and spelling and, in a few instances, some substantive changes from the earlier edition.⁵¹ Clearly, Ashmole has not simply appropriated Rabbards’s 1591 text, which is, I believe, superior in nearly every respect: more modern and consistent in spelling, punctuation, and phrasing. Nonetheless, Ashmole’s text occasionally presents illuminating readings, a few of which I have adopted in this edition, and he includes in the *Theatrum* several additional works by

being the one Ashmole “most relyed upon.” Nonetheless, Sloane 2598 and Ashmole’s text are far from identical: the printed version contains some minor transpositions of words and more modern spelling, fewer abbreviations and contractions, and much more punctuation, which is generally lacking in the manuscript. There are occasional substantive differences (e.g., the opening line of the Prologue in Ashmole uses “Yncomprehensyble,” Sloane “incomparable”).

⁵⁰See the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, 456. Ripley’s “retraction,” which Ashmole prints on page 193 of his collection, is reflected in the “*Admonition, wherein the Author declareth his erroneous Experiments*.”

⁵¹For example, compare stanza 21, “Of Calcination,” in the present edition, with Ashmole’s version, which follows (*TCB*, 134):

But hyt hath Names I say to the infynyte,
For after each thyng that Blacke ys to syght;
Namyd hyt ys tyll the tyme that hyt wex Whyte,
For after blacknesse when yt wexeth bryght,
Then hath hyt names of more delyght:

After Whyte thyngs, the Red after the same,
Rule of Red thyngs, doth take hys name.

In addition, stanza 7 of the “Epistle by the same Author written to King Edward the 4.” in 1591, appears as stanza 9 of the epistle in the *TCB*; these two sections are themselves juxtaposed in the two editions, the “Epistle” appearing at the end of 1591 and second in Ashmole’s edition, immediately following the *Titulus Operis*. Stanzas 23 and 24 “Of Putrefaction” are reversed in the *TCB*.

Ripley or attributed to him, that are not part of the *Compound* proper.⁵² Undoubtedly, the appearance of all of these works in Ashmole's popular collection of native English alchemical poets would have done much to preserve Ripley's name and enhance his reputation in later ages.

Ripley's popularity on the Continent in the seventeenth century is also evidenced by frequent publication of his works as well as a growing number of commentaries on them. The *Opuscula quædam chemica* (Frankfurt, 1614) includes the *Medulla Philosophiæ Chemicæ Georgii Ripleyi Angli*. Interestingly, this version of the *Medulla* closes with the *Oratio Auctoris ad Deum*, which is sometimes included in manuscript copies of the *Compound*, as well as in the 1591 printed edition where it becomes the opening of the Preface.⁵³ Ludovicus Combachius's Latin edition of Ripley's collected works, the *Opera Omnia Chemica*, appeared in Kassel in 1649 and featured the *Liber 12 portarum* as the opening treatise, thus assuring wide distribution of Ripley's works both on the Continent and in England in the learned language. Further evidence of his growing international reputation is the fact that at least three German translations of selected treatises appeared in 1624, 1667, and 1676; and Latin versions were included in several extraordinarily popular alchemical anthologies, such as Lazarus Zetzner's voluminous *Theatrum Chemicum* (1613-61) and J.J. Manget's *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa* (1702).

Individual works in English also came to be published in collections of alchemical treatises, such as the *Aurifontina Chymica*, edited by John Frederick Houpreght in 1680, William Cooper's *Collectanea Chymica* (1684), and, as previously noted, William Salmon's edition and translation of Ripley's *Medulla Alchymia*

⁵²These include the "Verses Belonging to An Emblematicall Scrowle," 375-79; "The Mystery of Alchymists," 380-88; "The Preface . . . to Medulla," 389-92; and "A Short Worke . . . [by] Sir G. Ripley," 393-96.

⁵³The *Oratio* begins, "O Lumen incompraehensibile, gloriosum in maiestate, cuius radiorum claritas offuscat nostra lumina" (42); translated, this section becomes the first five stanzas of the 1591 *Preface* and also appears in some manuscript versions of the *Compound*. This is an interesting instance of the kind of fluidity that exists in alchemical manuscripts, where transference of portions of texts is possible from one work to another.

was included in the *Medicina Practica or Practical Physick* of 1692.

Finally, the growing availability of texts of Ripley's works resulted in an enormous increase in manuscript "expositions," "elucidations," and "expoundings" of the *Compound* during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This proliferation of commentaries is amply demonstrated in the British Library's Sloane collection.⁵⁴ In other collections, excellent examples are "Benjamin Lock his Picklock to Riply his Castle," with a preface by Arthur Dee and copied by Elias Ashmole, housed at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, and the curious commentary by "M:P." that is bound into the Huntington Library copy of the 1591 *Compound of Alchymy*.⁵⁵ Among printed works, the major attempt at explicating Ripley's best known writings, including the *Compound*, was *Ripley Reviv'd*, published in 1678 by the pseudonymous Eirenaeus Philalethes, generally identified as the Bermuda-born, Harvard-educated, George Starkey.⁵⁶ In summary, even though the general attitude toward alchemy and alchemists in Restoration England was becoming increasingly skeptical, there was nonetheless strong interest in George Ripley and his works, enough for Edward Phillips to include him with the "Eminent Poets Among the Moderns," in Phillips' *Theatrum Poetarum, or a Compleat Collection of the Poets, Especially the Most Eminent of all Ages* (1675): "George Ripley, a Canon of Bridlington in the time of King Henry the 7th, who in old English Verse wrote several Chymical Misteries pretending to Lead

⁵⁴Examples include Sloane MSS 633, ff.2-13b; 2567, ff.23-33; 3631, ff.51-63; 3633, f.17; and 3757, ff.31b-34.

⁵⁵Arthur Dee states on the second leaf of Wellcome MS 436: "This Booke I receaved from M^r Heriot, at Sion howse, who for many yeares, instructed the Earle of Northumberland in the Mathematicks, when he lived in the tower. Anno. 1602. June 6." The Preface is signed "Art.Dee." Benjamin Lock was a student of John Dee, father of Arthur. This statement is noted in Lyndy Abraham's introduction to her edition of *Arthur Dee Fasciculus Chemicus, Translated by Elias Ashmole*, English Renaissance Hermeticism (New York and London: Garland, 1997), xlvii. On the Huntington Ripley commentary, see my "Expounding George Ripley: A Huntington Alchemical Manuscript," *Huntington Library Quarterly* (forthcoming).

⁵⁶The most recent and complete study is William R. Newman, *Gehennical Fire: The Lives of George Starkey, an American Alchemist in the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1994).

to the attaining of the Philosophers Stone."⁵⁷ For Phillips, as for Ashmole before him, a genuine nationalistic pride in English history, language, and achievements in "old *English Verse*" was an important factor in preserving the names of native alchemical authors and writings from past ages.

The Compound as Poem

The Compound of Alchymy is not merely a treatise concerning mastery of the twelve stages of the alchemical process leading to the philosopher's stone, it is a long and complex *poem* on this subject. For this reason, brief attention must be given to its distinctly poetic qualities and the ways in which Ripley's aims and objectives are closely linked to its verse format. In a very broad sense, whether prose or verse, alchemical discourse has, from its beginnings, adopted many qualities and techniques closely allied with poetry: a fondness for allegory and symbol, abundant use of simile and metaphor, colorful and enigmatic language that seeks selective revelation and concealment, and a complicated set of traditions and conventions inherited from earlier times. Despite insistence to the contrary, one of the latter is rejection of clear, "plain," direct statement in favor of a discourse marked by riddle and enigma. In light of the prevalence of these attributes, it is not an exaggeration to regard much alchemical writing as at least aspiring to the condition of poetry, even if it achieves this state only rarely. And, looked at from the opposite viewpoint, proof of this alliance may be found in the fact that often the greatest poets—Chaucer, Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, Marvell and Milton—have drawn upon the subject matter and language of alchemy in writing their works.⁵⁸

That English medieval and Renaissance alchemical authors found poetic forms and techniques especially appealing is seen in the vast amount of alchemical writing that exists in verse—

⁵⁷*Theatrum Poetarum*, 55. On the general antagonism toward various forms of occultism in Restoration England, see chap. 9 of my *Darke Hieroglyphicks: Alchemy in English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration*.

⁵⁸For example, see Lyndy Abraham, *Marvell and Alchemy* (Aldershot, Hants.: Scolar Press, 1990) and my *Darke Hieroglyphicks: Alchemy in English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration*.

a fact amply demonstrated in works ranging from Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* to Robert M. Schuler's recent collection of previously unpublished alchemical poetry dating from 1570–1700.⁵⁹ Schuler sees Renaissance alchemical poetry as being in the tradition of late medieval didactic verse and in another context has written:

Original scientific poems in the vernacular began to be written in the Middle Ages throughout Europe, and in England at least this native tradition was highly influential on Renaissance scientific poetry . . . alchemy in general also remained the most popular subject of vernacular scientific poets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As did Empedocles and his fellow Greek scientific poets, the alchemists preferred verse to prose because the dignity of verse accorded with the venerability of their subject. In addition, verse form made possible the use of acrostics, anagrams, and other linguistic devices by which certain occult knowledge could be kept from uninitiated readers.⁶⁰

Much alchemical poetry, it seems to me, fits into the genre of scientific poetry a good deal less comfortably than Schuler suggests. I have difficulty, for example, seeing how the “po-etic” devices noted in the final sentence of the previous quotation and their intended purpose (to keep knowledge from the uninitiated) can be reconciled with an encompassing genre that is committed to practical and technical instruction, i.e., the *Lehrgedicht* tradition.⁶¹ While alchemical poetry unquestionably possesses the qualities noted (and many others), its relationship to the genre of scientific poetry must be carefully delineated: can a poetry that aims simultaneously at revealing and *concealing* be a suitable vehicle for communicating the plain, experiential

⁵⁹Robert M. Schuler, ed., *Alchemical Poetry, 1575–1700, from Previously Unpublished Manuscripts* (New York and London: Garland, 1995). See also Singer's *Catalogue of Latin and Vernacular Alchemical Manuscripts*, vol. 2, pt. D., for a listing of “Alchemical Verse and Commentaries Thereon.”

⁶⁰Robert M. Schuler, “Three Renaissance Scientific Poems,” *Studies in Philology, Texts and Studies*, 75:5 (winter 1978): 2–3. See also Schuler's *English Magical and Scientific Poems to 1700: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York and London: Garland, 1979).

⁶¹Schuler, *English Magical and Scientific Poems*, xiii.

"truths" of science to a broad audience? Nonetheless, Schuler's speculation concerning the way in which the dignity of poetic form was thought by the alchemists to uphold the venerability of their subject gets to the heart of the matter.

Ripley's *Compound* provides a good basis for discussion of one aspect of the relationship between poetic expression and alchemy that bears on the desire to impart a sense of dignity and venerability—its verse form. Poetically, the *Compound's* uniqueness does not reside in its fairly successful use of a large, encompassing metaphor: the seeker's quest to gain the keys to unlock the twelve gates to the castle of alchemical knowledge, or, as he states at the end of the poem's first "gate" or chapter,

At the first gate now art thou in,
Of the Philosophers Castell where they dwell,
Proceede wisely that thou may winne
In at moe gates of that Castell,
Which Castell is round as any bell,
And gates it hath eleven yet moe,
One is conquered, now to the second goe. (st. 22, "Of
Calcination")

These "keys" are the twelve stages in the alchemical process which must be mastered in order: Calcination, Dissolution, Separation, Conjunction, Putrefaction, Congelation, Cibation, Sublimation, Firmentation, Exaltation, Multiplication, and Projection. Ripley's employment of an encompassing metaphor to achieve order, coherence, and a sense of direction, while quite effective, is common enough in alchemical writing in both prose and verse, as we see, for example, in "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon," attributed by Ashmole to Abraham Andrews.⁶² Nor is Ripley's extensive use of extravagant simile, vivid imagery, enigmatic symbol and allegory in any way unique in alchemical poetry.

However, Ripley's employment of the rhyme royal stanza in the *Compound*, though by no means unique,⁶³ does set this work

⁶²Included in *TCB*, 278–290.

⁶³For example, other uses of rhyme royal in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*

apart from the bulk of alchemical poetry and certainly from writing in prose. Why should Ripley have chosen this intricate stanzaic form and what would he have expected it to contribute to his expression?

Approximately one hundred years after Ripley completed the *Compound*, George Gascoigne formally defined rhyme royal—probably for the first time—and commented on its appropriate use:

Rythme royall is a verse of tenne sillables; and seven such verses make a staffe, whereof the first and thirde lines do aunswer (acrosse) in like terminations and rime, the second, fourth, and fifth do likewise answeere eche other in terminations, and the two last do combine and shut up the Sentence: this hath bene called Rithme royall, and surely it is a royall kinde of verse, serving best for grave discourses.⁶⁴

The appropriateness of this “royall kinde of verse” form for “grave discourses” is also confirmed, at about the same time, by King James VI of Scotland, who, acknowledging that rhyme royal was chiefly identified with Chaucer’s brilliant use of it in *Troilus and Criseyde*, recommends that “For tragicall materis, complaintis, or testamentis, use this kynde of verse following, callit *Troilus* verse.”⁶⁵ Chaucer, if not the “inventer” of rhyme royal, was unquestionably its greatest practitioner, employing it not only in *Troilus* but in “The Complaynt unto Pity,” *The Parlement of Foules*, and several of the *Canterbury Tales*. Through Chaucer’s genius, rhyme royal became what Martin Stevens has termed “a conscious form of higher poetic address,” “the first consciously shaped stanza of high style in English literature. . . . It set the mode for serious, elevated long poems in the

include “Hermes Bird” (213–26); “Bloomefields Blossoms: Or, The Campe of Philosophy” (305–23), which, although not consistently in iambic pentameter, does use the 7-line stanza and rhyme royal rhyme scheme; “Sir Edward Kelle’s Worke” (324–32); and “The Preface prefixt to Sir Geo: Ripley’s Medulla” (389–92), which employs a tetrameter line but with the customary rhyme scheme.

⁶⁴George Gascoigne, *Certayne Notes of Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse or Ryme in English* (1575), in G. Gregory Smith, ed., *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), 1:54.

⁶⁵King James VI, *A Short Treatise on Verse*, in G. Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 1:222.

English language until the sixteenth century.”⁶⁶ Through extensive use by Lydgate, Hoccleve, Dunbar, Henryson, Hawes, and Barclay, “*Troilus* verse” retained these lofty associations from the time of Chaucer, through the age of George Ripley, and well into the sixteenth century. In short, Ripley’s choice of rhyme royal for the *Compound of Alchymy* indicates that he considered his work to be serious, important, and worthy of expression in a lofty poetic form; equally, he might have hoped that his audience would regard it with the same dignity and reverence that were accorded to Chaucer’s poetry.

It remains to note one further, related link between the early use of rhyme royal and Ripley’s poem. Stevens has shown that from its earliest appearance this verse form and its French equivalent, *chant royal*, had a ceremonial function: it was the preferred form of poetic address to kings as well as for the expression of works to be presented to royalty.⁶⁷ This is precisely the case with Ripley’s *Compound* which, as the dedicatory epistle shows, was addressed to King Edward IV (1442–83). Although the epistle itself is written, not in rhyme royal, but a related eight-line stanza (rhyming ababbcbc), it is an address to the English monarch on matters of great importance to the author. For this reason, Ripley adopts a stance that is polite and respectful but not that of a servile flatterer (see st. 3). In this regard, comparison of Ripley’s tone with that of Raph Rabbards’s epistle dedicatory to Queen Elizabeth in the 1591 edition is instructive.

With considerable daring and ingenuity, Ripley assumes a position that is in some ways superior to that of King Edward: he already possesses the secret of the philosopher’s stone (sts. 3–5) and has chosen to impart it to the King, if, that is, Edward will accept it on Ripley’s terms. Rhetorically, stanzas 5–6 are of great interest for their strategy in reducing the distance between majesty and speaker, power and favor residing surprisingly with the latter. As a result of his careful reversal of the usual relationship, Ripley can then proceed with instructions both moral (“If God fortune you by me to win this treasure, / Serve him

⁶⁶“The Royal Stanza in Early English Literature,” *PMLA*, 94,1 (Jan. 1979): 66, 74.

⁶⁷“The Royal Stanza in Early English Literature,” 62–65.

devowtly with more lawde and thanking," st. 7) and alchemical. There is even an interesting passage on personal habits and hygiene (sts. 17–20), reminiscent of the popular books of advice and instructions given by Aristotle to Alexander the Great. The final effect is that King Edward becomes a kind of alchemical initiate who, having received instructions that will bring himself to a state of perfection, is allowed by Ripley, the alchemical master, to glimpse the arcane secrets of the art (sts. 26–27): "Thus you shall make the great Elixer, and Aurum potabile / By the grace and will of God, to whom be all honour and glorie."

Note on this Edition

The text of this new critical edition of the first printed edition of the *Compound of Alchymy* (1591) was initially transcribed from a microfilm copy of an original held at the Huntington Library (HEH). The transcription was then corrected against this original and collated with copies located at the Folger Shakespeare Library (F), the British Library (BL), and the Ferguson Collection of the University of Glasgow Library (G1, G2, G3). The few, generally minor, discrepancies found among these copies are cited in the Textual Notes.

Except for conventional modernizations (v=u, u=v, i=j, j=i), I have preserved the spelling of the 1591 edition and most of its distinctive typographical and stylistic features: capitalization, use of italics, line centering and spacing. I have corrected obvious typographical errors and, in a number of places, introduced emendations where sense, context, or the authority of manuscripts or other printed editions, such as Ashmole (*TCB*), appear to dictate the need to do so. Where such substantive changes occur, I have cited passages, either in the Textual Notes or in the Commentary, from the manuscript or printed edition that support the emendation. All printed sources used in the preparation of this edition are included in the first section of the Bibliography; Ripley manuscripts consulted appear in the second section. For ease of reference, I have numbered the stanzas, a practice which was not followed in the 1591 edition. Finally, textual emendations are signaled by asterisks and referenced by page number in the Textual Notes; annotations in the Commentary are referenced by upper case Roman numerals for gate number and Arabic numerals for stanza numbers (e.g., III.14).

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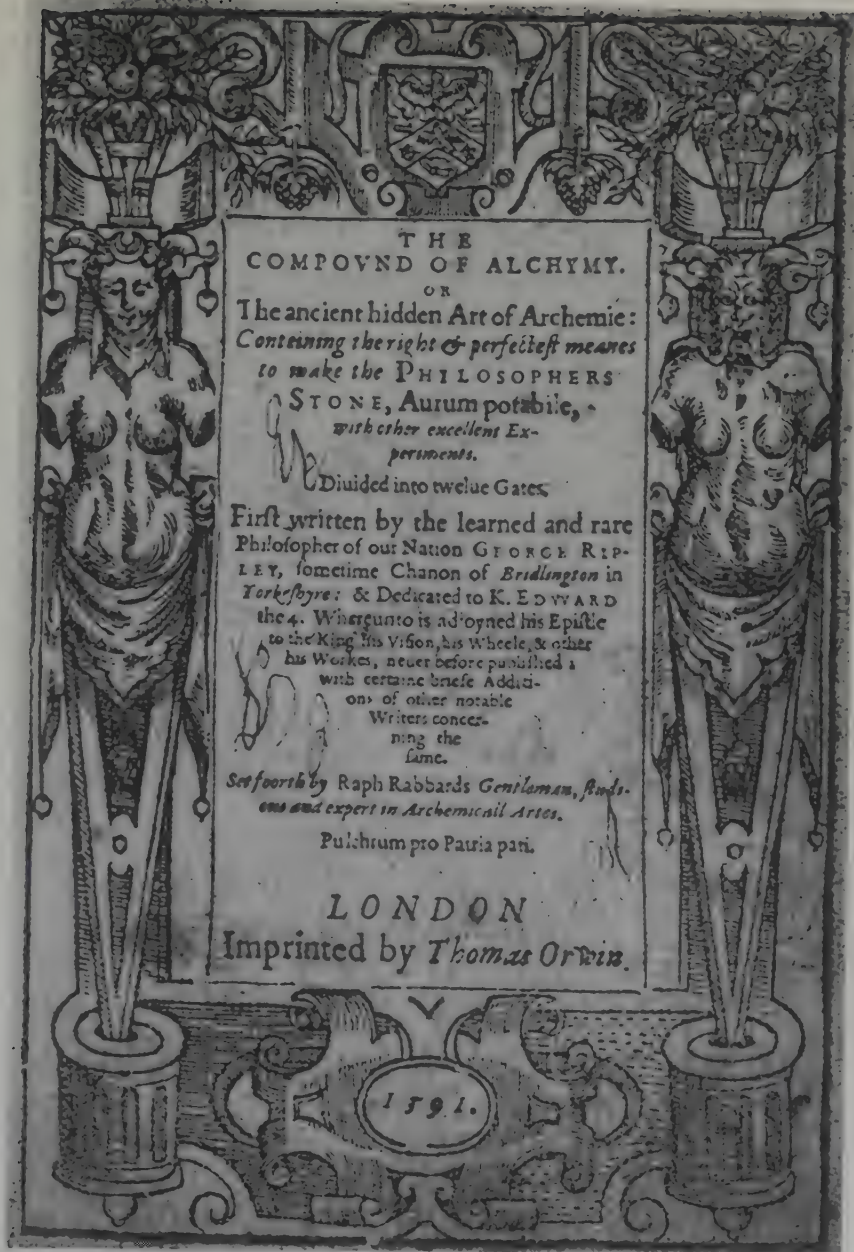
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Illustrated title page, George Ripley. *Compound of Alchymy* (1591). Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

TO THE MOST HIGH
and Mightie PRINCESSE,
ELIZABETH *by the grace*
of GOD QVEENE of
England, France, & Ire-
land, Defender of the
faith, &c.



Xcellent, most
gracious, & sacred
SOVERAIGNE
calling often to re-
membrance, how
maraculously it ple-
sed the Almightye
manie waies to pre-
serve & defend your
MAIESTIE, *in*
the time of late do-
mesticall persecuti-
on, from the merci-
lesse hands of those
brutcherly murder-
ers, who not onely sought all occasions by spilling your HIG-
NESSE innocent blood, to bereave this Kingdome, and vs all,
(that since haue liued vnder your royall, prosperous, and happie
Gouernment) of so rare and precious a leuell, as Nature hath
not at anye time to any Nation else where, afforded the like;
but also persecuted with sword, fire, banishment, or (at the least)
streight imprisonment, all such as were in any respect fauoured by
A 2 *your*

THE COMPOUND OF ALCHYMY.

OR

The ancient hidden Art of Archemie:
*Conteining the right and perfectest meanes
to make the PHILOSOPHERS
STONE, Aurum potabile,
with other excellent Experiments.*

Divided into twelve Gates.

First written by the learned and rare
Philosopher of our Nation
GEORGE RIPLEY,
sometime Chanon of *Bridlington* in
Yorkeshyre: & Dedicated to

K. EDWARD the 4. Whereunto is adjoyned his
Epistle to the King, his Vision, his Wheele, & other
his Workes, never before published:
with certaine briefe Additions of other
notable Writers concerning the same.

*Set foorth by Raph Rabbards Gentleman,
studious and expert in Archemicall Artes.*

Pulchrum pro Patria pati.

L O N D O N

Imprinted by *Thomas Orwin*.

1591.

TO THE MOST HIGH
and Mightie PRINCESSE,
ELIZABETH by the grace of
GOD QUEENE of *England,*
Fraunce, & Ireland,
Defender of the faith, &c.¹

Excellent, most gracious, & sacred *SOVERAIGNE*: calling often to remembrance, how miraculously it pleased the Almighty manie waies to preserve & defend your *MAJESTIE*, in the time of late domesticall persecution, from the mercilesse hands of those butcherly murtherers, who not onely sought all occasions by spilling your *HIGHNESSE* innocent blood, to bereave this Kingdome, and us all, (that since have lived under your royall, prosperous, and happie Government) of so rare and precious a Jewell, as Nature hath not at anie time to any Nation else where, afforded the like; but also prosecuted with sword, fire, banishment, or (at the least) streight imprisonment, all such as were in any respect favoured by your *HIGHNESSE*, or in anie sort cast their eyes once toward the Orient, where the bright splendent beames of your incomparable *MAJESTIE*, lightneth our Horizon, to the comfort and consolation of manie thousands afflicted, & the singular joy of the whole Realme, verie few persons excepted, whose bleared eyes being dazeled therewith, sought palpable darknesse, to avoide the cleare light then arising with the rare Comet or incomparable day starre of your most excellent *MAJESTIE* unto us: whose piercing rayes hath since like the Sunne beames both dispersed all grosse mists and fogges of ignorance, error, & blinde superstition, and withall so comforted and nourished the plant of infallible truth of the Gospell, (first taking roote in this Land in the short Raigne of the peerelesse Prince *EDWARD* the sixt your *MAJESTIES* Brother, of most

rare expectation and famous memorie) as the same being now sprung up to a perfect tree of such full groath, that the branches thereof have spread themselves long and wide manie waies over other Empires, Kingdomes & States, mauger the Divell, the Pope, & the King of Spaine, with all their fraternitie, consorts, leaguers, and adherents, or other their Ministers, spreaders and maintainers of lies; under the shelter and covert of which flourishing Palme, all true Christians have been, are, and (I hope) long shall be (by the continuance of your *MAJESTIES* most bountifull and gracious especiall favor) protected and shrowded, from the burning heate of the sharpe persecutions of all malicious Enemies thereof: the which G O D of his great mercie graunt. Pondering I say (most high and mightie *PRINCESSE*) the manifold imminent dangers, your sacred *MAJESTIE* by the omnipotent wonderfull providence of Almighty G O D, with more than humane vertue, and feminine patience sustained; & in the end (contrarie to all expectation) escaping the rage, furie, tyrannicall attempts, and secret divelish practises of your *HIGHNESSE* mortall Enemies, (utter professed unreconcilable adversaries) to the eternall truth: whereof my selfe was an eye witnesse, and so farre privie of some of the most mischievous intended conspiracies, as for my faithfull indevours by such rare secrete services as were by mee effected to prevent the same; I tasted (amongst the rest of such as then honoured, revered, and of bounden duetie loved your *MAJESTIES* rare vertues) so great extremitie of imprisonment, & other hard usage many wayes, as scaping with life, (by timely and happy alteration of the state) I felt long after the paines of those torments, whereby my health in xx. yeares after was extreemly empayred: But when I consider on the other side withall, the strange and miraculous Heroicall Actions both martiall & politick which have been (since in the time past of your *HIGHNESSE* most prosperous raigne) beyond all expectation performed with singuler government and incomparable magnanimitie, farre passing all humane wisdom and mans force (whereof posteritie shall want no due recordes of worthy Registers) I can not but forget all sorrow, & exceedingly rejoyce, assuring & perswading my selfe G O D hath ordained your *MAJESTIE* to accomplish yet farre greater matters for his glory

and your owne eternall memory, than time hath yet revealed: for the better accomplishment whereof, every dutifull subject and good Patriott ought in time of tranquillitie to prepare and furnish themselves according to their severall gifts, abilities, and different faculties: to further and set foorth a worke so great as is likely to fall out by all consequence of reason in this your *MAJESTIES* most happy raygne, vz. the Nobilitie with learning, judgement, and experience, for counsell and advice, as well for warlike discipline as for civill government; for that the one cannot long continue without the other: Gentlemen with ingenious devises and stratagems of warre both for sea and land, and the whole Souldiorie of all sorts with activitie, and the practise of such sortes of weapons as they shall addict themselves unto, or be found fit to serve withall, whereby every man of what degree or quality soever professing the wars, may in time of cessations of Armes, some in one sorte, some in an other, inable themselves for the defence of their Countrey, against they shalbe employed; for without appoyntment & calling, no man ought to intrude or offer himselfe, in such sorte as is now too commonly used; which is the cause that so many audacious insufficient blinde bayardes are set a worke: whilst the modest, skilfull, and experienced live retired, attending their vocation by the Magistrate: of which number I professe my selfe in my facultie to bee one, who having these fortie yeares amongst many other most commendable exercises and inventions of so warlike Engines, founde out divers devises of rare service, both for Sea and land, some whereof (whose charge exceeded not my small abilitie) I have performed and made the use thereof knowne unto many my honourable, skilfull and experienced good friendes at home, and to some Princes beyonde the Seas, whereof ignoraunt persons having by chaunce light on some Modules or Patternes of small importance imperfect, have vainely arrogated the invention unto themselves; not knowing in any sorte the use and force thereof in service, making therby great advantage to themselves by abusing superiour Authoritie with these imperfect first Elements of my preparations to greater matters; supplying the lamenes and effects thereof, by their formality, and mellicious frivolous discourses, wherein there is no substance to any purpose: seeking to reape thereby

the fruites of my chargeable and painefull labours; & my name in the meane time never once brought in question: Such is and hath beene the insolent, and shameles boldnes of ignorant persons in all times fit to be restrayned, least greater mischiefes and inconveniences ensue thereby, when occasion requireth due triall to be made of their sufficiencie, and the right use of these rare Experiments. But to leave (most gracious *SOVERAIGNE*) the consideration of these important causes unto the deepe wisdom and discrete providence of your *HIGHNES* owne carefull foresight, and the ordering and reformation thereof to such as are in authoritie: And to returne to my purpose; among many studious inventions, whereunto I have bent my minde as well for the service of my countrie, when time shall serve, as for mine owne satisfaction; Looking withall into some parte of the rare inscrutable secrets of naturall Philosophie*, and falling sometimes to the chargeable,² paynefull, and fruiteles practise thereof, by distillation, and other transmutation of Plants, Hearbs, Stones and Mineralls of all sortes: ayming at that marke, which many learned and greater Clearks than my selfe have shot at, and yet missed; I have notwithstanding by the way light (to my singuler contentment) on infinite rare conclusions, both profitable, pleasant, and serviceable; so that although my simple skill could not attaine to such perfection, as I desired, yet have I no cause to repent me any way of my travells therein employed but rather great occasion to lament me of my long discontinuance from the same, by losse of many yeares spent unprofitably in a laborinth of law suites, and private contention with men of verie great abilitie, and better friended than my selfe, wherein now utterly wearyed, and worne out of heart, through the greatnes of my adversaries purse and friendes, I am now forced for want of abilitie, after ten yeares chargeable suite, to relinquish the same, and to returne to those my delectable studies and serviceable exercises againe, as well to digest melancholick conceits, as to keepe olde age from such extream wants, as the iniquitie of times, the tedious greevance by delays, the striving against strong armes wil bring; the least able to weary a far welthier man than my selfe, hoping yet to recover some parte of my lost time, and (if abilitie altogether faile me not before I die,) to make unto

your *MAJESTIE* some rare Present by experiments *Chimicall* or *Martiall*, such as hitherto hath not been performed by any other. Wherefore (most gracious *SOVERAIGNE*) desiring hencefoorth to employ the rest of my shorte course, in more serious sorte, to the service of G O D, your *MAJESTIE*, and my Countrey, & by all meanes I can possible to profit some wayes this Royall kingdome and State, (wherein I have lived these threescore yeares and more) I am bolde to publish this rare worke of learned *Ripley* under your *MAJESTIES* protection for the instruction and direction of all studentes, and lovers of the secreat Mysteries of naturall Philosophie; delivering most compendiously the hidden Arte and high Myserie of making the Philosophers Stone, (sought for by many thousandes in all ages, but founde of very fewe, and they such as rapte with the excellency thereof, have in contempt of the worlde, retired themselves from common societie, keeping the same most secret to themselves, esteeming the world not worthy of so precious a Jewell. For the certaintie and probabilitie whereof, if any shall bee doubtfull let them advisedly reade throughly this work, and afterwards peruse the doings of such other our worthy countrey men as have written most learnedly therof, as Frier *Bacon*, *John Pauper*, Sir *Thomas Norton* knight, *John Garland*, & especially M. Doctor *Dee* in his *Monas Hyeroglyphica*, and many others most plainly teaching the same, whose depth of learning *Theoricall* if it were yet executed by any experienced practitioner, I doubt not but your *MAJESTIE* should shortly see that which the world thinketh παραδοξότατον to be 'Αληθέστατον:³ and if I had bin so fortunate as to have spent these seaven yeares past in one of your *MAJESTIES* manifold fruitlesse still-houses: I durst before this time have presumed to promise more of my selfe than I will speak of, which disability through my foresaid troubles, now suffer me not to performe in such sorte as I desire, & have best leasure to doe in my old age, but I hope (the premises considered, my dutifull good will, & affection to my country in giving encouragement and meanes unto others by publication of this most learned Author) will be taken in good parte, the rather being patronized by your sacred *MAJESTIE*, against all venymous darts of the envious & malicious tungs, of such who being ignorant them-

selves of all good sciences, would otherwise maligne the perfections & vertuous indevours of the well deserving. Thus hoping your *MAJESTIE* will of your accustomed clemencie, accept of this my present as a pledge of my fidelity and dutifull zeale to your *MAJESTIE*, humbly craving pardon for my boldnes; I cease to be further troublesome, daylie praying to the Almighty long to continue your *MAJESTIES* most prosperous Raigne over us, with great increase of honour, and felicitie, to his glory, untill double Nestors yeares.

Your MAJESTIES most loyall subject,

R A P H R A B B A R D E S.

To the right Honourable,
Worshipfull, and worthy Gentlemen
of England, and other learned &
industrious Students in the
secrets of Philosophie.

Having reserved the Copie hereof (Right Honorable, and gentle Readers) these fortie yeares for many secrete uses, corrected by the most learned of our time, and feeling my self, now through age declining, and otherwise hyndred with troublesome suites in law, which constrained me to discontinew these and such other commendable practises, for the benefite and defence of my Prince and Countrie: I have thought good to publish the same, the rather for that there are but a few copies left, and those for the most parte corrupted by negligence, or mistaking of ignorant writers thereof: Being partly encouraged hereunto by the learned Philosopher *Seneca*,⁴ who accompteth it an Act meritorious to preserve or revive Science from the Cinders, and to eternize vertuous acts with perpetual memorie: Finding it strange, that so excellent a Monument as this most rare and learned worke of *George Ripley*, should so long lye hidden in obscuritie, & passe from hand to hand a hundreth and fiftie yeares without utter defacing; seeing that many notable works published, have in far shorter time perished. He lived in the time of king *Edward* the 4, & *Richard* the usurper, in great fame & estimation, for his rare knowledge in these secrets: And to utter his further commendation in a word; if this his worke be perused with the eye of judgement, and practised by those that are experienced, I shall not neede to feare the losse of my labour, when some of my Countriemen which cannot attaine unto the highest hidden mysterie, shall yet finde many things both pleasant and profitable, divers wayes serviceable to Kingdomes, States, and Common weales:

And if one among tenne thousand can hitt the marke, (whereat the whole worlde hath aymed) we shall not hereafter neede to seeke out the Sandes of *Ganges*, for that which lyeth hid in the secrets of *Ripley*: which I offer here to the view of the learned, and have presumed the publishing hereof, chiefly for the benefite of my Countrey men; and especially to satisfie the often & importunate request of many my learned good friends, not doubting but that the skilfull wil yeelde me my due, howsoever the ignorant shal esteeme thereof: which if I shall finde to be accepted according to my good meaning, I shall therby be further encouraged to imparte some other rare experiments of *Distillations* and *Fire-workes* of great service, not hitherto committed in writing or put in practise by any of our nation; although of late some meere toies have beene highly admired, and extraordinarily rewarded: The charge whereof will be found utterly lost, when perfect tryall shall be made of their slender use and force. To conclude, If this my good intent shalbe answerable to your expectations, I have obtained the fulnes of my desires.

Yours in the furtherance of Science,

Raph Rabbards.

*Thomas Newtonus Cestreshyrius.*⁵

Alchymicæ indagaus arcana Georgius artis
Chremata Riplæus, rari miranda reliquit
Ingenii monumenta sui, quæ nulla vetustas
Exedet, aut putri poterit sepelire veterno.
Illotis nemo manibus mysteria tanta
Tractet, at *Hermeticam* veneretur χρυσοποιαν
Hanc Plato divinus fœdus vocat, aurea Naso
Vellera, & a vigili mala aurea septa dracone.
Laudibus hanc multis celebrant Mirandula, Lullus,
Geber, Avicenna, Hippocrates, Morienus, Aquinas,
Duns Scotus, Arnaldus, Vincentius, Oldradus, Hermes,
Plinius, Albertus, Ficinus, Cuba, Valescus,
Eustathius, Suidas, Maro, Zosimus, Haly, Baconus,
Rhasis, Aristoteles, Rosinus, Petrus ipse Aponensis,
Compluresque alii: cuncti almæ huic grata Sophiæ
Munera persolvant, linguisque animisque benigni.

Thomas Newton.

*J.D.gent: in praise of the Author, and his Worke.*⁶

Loe here a Worke, conteining rare effects,
Repleate with ripest frutes of *Ripleys* toyle,
Whose mellowed savour studious mindes directs
T'attaine the skill that may enrich their soile:
And though his Booke be carped at by *Zoile*,
Yet doth the same comprize such depth of Art,
As makes his fame eternized by desert.

The learned will (no doubt) delight therein,
And their delight will draw them on to skill:
Admit the simple force it not a pin,
So much the more the wise embrace it will.
Who seeks by Arte to clymbe up Honors hill,
To such perteynes this precious Stone divine,
For pease are fitter farre, than Pearle for Swine.

Tam Arte, quam Marte.

P. Bales Gent. in commendation
of the Author, and his twelve gates:
Orderly set down in the 12. last verses.⁷

Graunt to me *Muses* nine, & thou most sacred *Apollo*,
That in a vaine of a lofty verse, I may be reporter
Of the renowned skil to ye world by *Ripley* revealed:
Which in a Book tituled by the name of *Alchymie compound*
He to the King *Edward* of England fourth fro the conquest,
Writt in a verse pithily, with his hand very worthily penned.

Twelve chapters did he write, by the first to *Calcine* he teacheth,
And by the next readily privie *Dissolution* handleth:
To *Seperate* Eliments very plaine by the third he declareth,
And by the fourth (as in mariage) *Conjunction* ordreth:
To *Putrifie* most kindly the seede by the 5. he pronounceth:
And by the sixth chapter true *Congelation* uttereth.

Then followeth by the seaventh, how must be *Cibation* used,
But by the next chapter, duely *Sublimation* offered,
Ninthly the way measured, for *Fermentation* aptly,
And by the tenth rightly, there is *Exaltation* holden,
Infinite in number shewen how to *Multiplie* leaventhly:
Lastly, the work very fitly by cleanly *Projection* endeth.

Statuto bono, statute.

The Summe of this Worke, learnedly
reduced into these few Verses, by the divine
*Poet Palingenius.*⁸

Hunc juvenem Archadium, infidum, nimiumque fugacem,
Prendite, & immersum Stygiis occidite Lymphis
Post Hyales gremio impositum Deus excipiat, quem
Lemnia terra colit, sublatumque in cruce figat:
Tunc sepelite vtero in calido, & dissolvite putrem:
Cuius stillantes artus de corpore nostro
Spiritus egrediens penetrabit: & ordine miro,
Paulatim extinctum nigris revocabit ab umbris,
Aurata indutum clamyde, argentoque nitentem:
Proicite hunc demum in prunas, renovabitur alter
Vt Phoenix: & quæ tanget, perfecta relinquet
Corpora, naturæ ieges & fœdera vincens:
Mutabit speciis: paupertatemque fugabit.

*Sr. E. K. concerning the Philosophers Stone,
written to his especiall good friend, G. S. Gent.*⁹

The heavenlie Cope hath in him natures fower,
Two hidden, but the rest to sight appeare:
Wherein the Spermes of all the bodies lower
Most secret are, yet spring forth once a yeare:
And as the earth with water Authors are,
So of his part is drines end of care.

No flood so great, as that which floweth still:
No thing more fixt, than Earth digested thirse:
No winde so fresh, as when it serveth will:
No profit more, then keepe in, and be wise:
No better hap, than drie up aire to dust,
For then thou maist leave of, and sleepe thy lust.

Yet will I warne thee, least thou chaunce to faile,
Sublime thine earth with stinking water erst:
Then in a place where *Phoebus* onely tayle,
Is seene at midday, see thou mingle best:
For nothing shineth that doth want his light,
Nor doubleth beames, unlesse it first be bright.

Let no man lead, unlesse he knowe the way,
That wise men teach, or *Adrop*¹⁰ leadeth in,
Whereof the first is large and easiest pray,
The other hard, and meane but to begin,
For surely these, and no one more is found,
Wherein Apollo will his harp strings sound.

Example learne of G O D, that plaste the Skies,
Reflecting vertues from and t'everie poynt,
In which the moover wherein all things lies,
Doth hold the vertures all of everie joynt:
And therefore *Essence* fift¹¹ may well be said,
Conteining all, and yet himselfe a maid.

Remember also how the Gods began,
And by discent who was to each the Syre:
Then learne their lives and kingdomes if thou can,
Their manners eke, with all their whole attire?
Which if thou doe, and knowe to what effect,
The learned *Sophies* will thee not reject.

If this my Doctrine bend not with thy braine,
Then say I nothing, though I sayd too much:
Of truth tis good, will mooved me, not gaine,
To write these lines: yet write I not to such
As catch at crabs, when better frutes appeare,
And want to chuse at fittest time of yeare.

Thou maist (my friend) say, What is this for lore?
I aunswere, Such as auncient Phisicke taught:
And though thou red a thousand bookes before,
Yet in respect of this, they teach thee naught:
 Though maist likewise be blinde, and call me foole,
 Yet shall these Rules for ever praise their Schoole.

Sr. E. K.

*The Vision of Sir George Ripley,
Chanon of Bridlington.*¹²

When busie at my booke I was upon a certaine night,
This Vision here exprest appear'd unto my dimmed sight,
A toade full ruddle¹³ I saw did drinke the juice of grapes¹⁴ so
fast,

Till overcharged with the broath, his bowells all to brast,¹⁵
And after that from poysoned bulke, he cast his venome fell,
For grieve and paine whereof his members all began to swell;
With drops of poysoned sweate¹⁶ approching thus his secret den,
His cave with blasts of fumous ayre, he all bewhited then:
And from the which in space a golden humor did ensue,
Whose falling drops from high did staine the soile with ruddy
hew,¹⁷

And when his corps, the force of vitall breath began to lacke,¹⁸
This dying toade became forthwith like coale for colour black:
Thus drowned in his proper Veynes of poysoned flood,
For tearme of eightie dayes and foure he rotting stood:
By tryall then this venome to expell I did desire,
For which I did commit his carkase to a gentle fire:
Which done, a wonder to the sight, but more to be rehearst,
The toade with colours rare¹⁹ through every side was pearst:
And white appear'd when all the sundry hewes were past:
Which after being tinted, ruddle for evermore did last:
Then of the venome handled thus a medicine I did make,
Which venom kills, and saveth such as venome chaunce to take,
Glory be to him the graunter of such secret wayes,
Dominion, and Honour, both with worship and with prayse.

A M E N.

*Titulus operis.*²⁰

Here beginneth the compound of Alchymie,
Made by a Chanon of *Bridlington*,
After his learning in *Italie*,
At *Ixninge*²¹ for time he there did wonne:
In which he declared openly
The secrets both of Moone and Sonne,
How they their kinde to multiplie
In one bodie together must woonne.
Which Chanon *Sir George Ripley* hight,
Exempt from Claustrall observance,
For whom ye pray both day and night,
Sith he did labour you to aduance,
He turned darknes into light,
Intending to helpe you to happie chaunce,
Giving counsaile that you live right,
Doing unto God no displeasaunce.

*A briefe note to the Readers.*²²

The Wheele that is placed (Gentlemen) last, as the period of this secret Worke may of some be challenged (through the diversitie of Copies) to differ from the first. But herein I assure you I have observed no lesse care than counsaile, and that of knowen Practisers, whose censures (made more certaine by experience) have determined all doubts, and made me bolde to publish what followeth for the most auncient. If anie literall fault be past, amend it with your pens: if anie carper inveigh against me, defend me with your curtesies: and let them (if they can) condemne by cunning. Farewell.

R. Rabbardes.

The Compound of Alchymie.

A most excellent, learned, and worthie worke,
written to king *Edward the fourth*,
by *Sir George Ripley*. Chanon of
Bridlington in York-shire,
contayning twelve gates.

The Prologue.

1. Childe of this discipline incline to me thine eare
And harken to my doctrine with al thy diligence
These words of wisdom in minde doe thou beare,
Which of olde fathers be true in sentence:
Live cleane in soule, to God doe no offence.
Exalt thee not but rather keepe thee lowe,
Else will thy God in thee no wisdom sowe.

2. From sinfull doctrine and wicked thought,
The holy spirite doth him withdraw,
Nilling to dwell where sinne is wrought:
Dread God therefore and obey his law:
A righteous man forsooke I never sawe:
Neyther his seede begge bread for neede:
In holy scripture this doe I reede.

3. Make wisdom therefore thy mother to be,
And call on Prudence to be thy friend,
By pathes of truth they will guide thee,
With love and honesty wheresoever thou wend:
Both vertuous to be, curteous and hend:
Pray God therefore that thou maist finde,
Wisdom and Prudence with mouth and minde.

4. All manner good come with them shall,
And honestie by their hands innumerable,
Then into cumbrance shalt thou not fall,
So be they in riches incomparable:
To worship and profite they will thee able,
To cunning and all manner of grace,
Both here and after thy lives space.

5. For these benefites which they doe bring,
I meane these vertues of prudence and sapience,
To whome I can compare no thing,
No riches, nor spices of redolence,
Aboue all treasure such is their excellence,
That whatsoever earthly precious is,
To them is compared as clay Iwis.

6. Infinite treasure to man they be,
Who useth them shall friendship have
With God in heaven and there him see,
After them therefore busily crave,
For bodie and soule they will both save,
And here in goods thee multiply;
And afore princes thee dignifie.

7. Thinke how *Adam* lost his wisdom, e,
Sampson his might which was so strong:
King *Saule* also lost his kingdome,
And *David* was punished for his wrong:
In the Oke by the haire fayre *Absolon* hong,
King *Ezechias* by sicknes had punishment,
And many one moe for sinne was shent.

8. But see how other which lived weele,
And to their God did no offence,
Such chastisement did never feelee;
But God sheweth ever to them benevolence,

Enoch and *Hely* were carried hence,
To Paradise, and other good livers were
Of God rewarded in diverse mannere.

9. Some had great Fortune, some great cunning,
Some had great peace, some great riches,
Some conquered lands to their great wyning,
Some were exalted for their great meeknes,
Some other were saved from the cruelnes
Of Tyrants, Lyons, and of the hot furnace,
As *Daniel* and others in many a place.

10. Thus to good livers God sent great grace,
And unto sinners great and sore punishment,
Some to amend in this life had space,
Some sodainely with fire from heaven were brent,
Sinfull sodomites for ever were shent,
With *Dathan* and *Abiron* with many moe,
Which sunke for sinne to endles woe.

11. Thus ever sith this world was wrought,
God hath rewarded both evill and good:
Thus if it may rest in thy thought,
From sinfull living to change thy moode.
If sinfull people this understoode,
They ought to be afrayde God to offend,
And soone their sinfull lives to amend.

12. Therefore with God looke thou beginne,
That he by grace may dwell with thee,
So shalt thou best to wisdom winne;
And knowledge of our great privitie:
Nourish vertues, and from vices flee,
And trusting thou wilt thee well dispose,
Our secrets to thee I will disclose.

13. Keepe thou them secreate and for me pray,
Looke that thou use them to Gods pleasure,
Doo good with them what ever thou may;
For time thou shalt this life indure,
That after thy ende thou mayst be sure
In heaven for to rewarded be,
Which God graunt both to me and thee.

FINIS

The Preface.

1. O High incomprehensible and glorious Majestie,
Whose luminous beames obtundeth our speculation,
O trinehood in persons ô onehood in deity,*
Of Iherarchiall Jubilists gratulant glorification*,
O piteous purifier of soules and pure perpetuation,
O deviant from danger, ô drawer most debonayre,
From this troublesome vale of vanitie, ô our Exalter.

2. O power, ô wisdom, ô goodnes inexplicable,
Supporte me, teach me, and be my governor,
That never my living to thee be displicable,
But that I acquite me to thee as true professor,
At this beginning good Lord heare my prayer,
Be nigh with grace for to inforce my will,
Graunt witt that I may mine intent fulfill.

3. Most curious Cofer and copious of all treasure,
Thou art he from whome all goodnes doth descend,
To man and also to every creature,
Thine handy-work therefore vouchsafe to defend,
That we no time in living here mispend,
With troth here graunt us our living so to winne,
That into no danger of sinfulness we rinne.

4. And forasmuch* as we have for thy sake
Renounced our wills, the world and fleshly lust,
As thine owne professors us to thee take,
Sith in thee onely dependeth all our trust;
We can no further; to thee incline we must:
Thy secret treasure vouchsafe unto us,
Shew us thy secrets and to us be bounteous.

5. And amongst others which be profest to thee,
I me present as one with humble submission,
Thy servant beseeching that I may bee,
And true in living according to my profession,
In order Chanon Regular of *Bridlington*;
Beseeching thee Lord thou wilt me spare,
To thy true servants thy secrets to declare.

6. In the beginning when thou mad'st all of nought,
A globous matter and darke under confusion,
By him the beginning marveilously was wrought,
Conteyning naturally all things without division:
Of which in six dayes he made cleere distinction:
As Genesis apertly doth record.
Then heaven and earth were perfected by his word.

7. So through his will and power, out of one mas
Confused; was made each thing that being is,
But afore in glory as maker he was,
Now is and shall be without end I wis,
And purified soules up to his blis
Shall come a principle this may be one,
For the declaring of our precious stone.

8. For as of one masse was made all thing,
Right so in our practize must it be,
All our secreats of one Image must spring,
As in Philosophers bookes whoso list to see,
Our stone is called the lesse world, one and three;
Magnesa also of sulphure and Mercurie,
Proportionate by nature most perfectlie.

9. But many one marveileth and marvaile may,
And museth on such a marveilous thing,
What is our stone; sith Philosophers say
To such as ever be it in seeking.

For foules and fishes to us doth it bring,
Every man it hath, and it is in every place,
In thee in me, and in each thing, time and space?

10. To this I answer that *Mercurie* it is I wis,
But not the common called quicksilver by name,
But *Mercurie* without which nothing being is,
All Philosophers record and truely faine the same,
But simple searchers putteth them in blame,
Saying they hid it but they be blame worthy,
Which be no Clearkes and meddle with Philosophy.

11. But though it *Mercurie* be, yet wisely understand,
Wherein it is, and where thou shalt it seech,
Else I counsell thee take not this work in hand,
For Philosophers flatter fooles with fayre speech:
But listen to me, for truly I will thee teach,
Which is this *Mercurie* most profitable,
Being to thee nothing deceiveable.

12. It is more neere in some things than in some;
Therefore take heede what I to thee write
For if knowledge to thee never come,
Therefore yet shalt thou me not twite,
For I will truly now thee excite
To understand well *Mercuries* three,
The keyes which of this science bee.

13. *Raymond* his menstrues doth them call,
Without which truly no trueth is done;
But two of them be superficiall,
The third essentiall of Sunne and Moone,
Their properties I will declare right soone,
And *Mercurie* of mettalls essentiall,
Is the principle of our stone materiall.

14. In Sunne and Moone our Menstrue is not seene,
It appeareth not but by effect to sight,
That is the stone of which we meene,
Who so our writings conceiveth aright,
It is a soule, a substance bright.
Of Sunne and Moone a subtile influence,
Whereby the earth receiveth resplendence.

15. For what is Sunne and Moone sayth *Avicen*,
But earth which is pure white and red:
Take from it the said cleerenes, and then
That earth will stand but in little stead;
The whole compound is called our lead:
The qualitie of cleerenes from Sun and Moone dooth come,
These are our menstrues both all and some.

16. Bodies with the first we calcine naturally
Perfect, but none which been uncleene,
Except one which is usually
Named by Philosophers the Lyon greene:
He is the meane the Sunne and Moone betweene
Of winning tincture with perfectnes,
As *Geber* thereunto beareth witnes.

17. With the second which is an humiditie
Vegitable, reviving that earst was dead,
Both principles materials must loosed be
And formalls, els stand they little in stead:
These menstrews therefore know I thee reed,
Without the which neither true calcination
Done may be, nor true dissolution.

18. With the third humiditie most permanent,
Incombustible and unctuous in his nature,
Hermes tree unto ashes is brent,
It is our naturall fire most sure,

Our Mercurie, our Sulphur, our tincture pure,
Our soule, our stone borne up with winde
In the earth ingendred, beare this in minde.

19. This stone also tell thee I dare,
Is the vapour of mettalls potentiall,
How thou shalt get it, thou must beware,
For invisible truely is this menstruall,
Howbeit with the second water philosophicall,
By separation of Elements it may appeare
To sight, in forme of water cleare.

20. If this menstrie by labour exuberate
With it may be made Sulphur of nature,
If it be well and kindly acuate
And circulate into a spirit pure,
Then to dissolve thou must be sure,
Thy base with it in divers wise,
As thou shalt know by thy practise.

21. That poynt therefore in his due place,
I will declare with other moe,
If God will graunt me grace and space,
And me preserve in life from woe,
As I thee teach looke thou doe so:
And for the first ground principall,
Understand thy waters menstruall.

22. And when thou hast made *Calcination*,
Encreasing not wasting moysture radicall,
Untill thy base by oft subtilation,
Will lightly flowe as wax upon mettall,
Then loose it with thy vegetable menstruall,
Till thou have oyle thereof in colour bright,
Then is that menstrie visible to sight.

23. And oyle is drawne out in colour of golde,
Or like thereto out of fine red lead,
Which *Raymond* sayd when he was olde,
Much more than golde would stand in stead:
For when he was for age nigh dead,
He made thereof *Aurum potable*,
Which him revived as men might see.

24. For so together may they be circulate,
That is the base oyle and the vegetable menstruall,
So that it be by labour exuberate,
And made by craft a stone celestially,
Of nature so fire that we it call,
Our *Bazeliske* or our *Cockatrice*,
Our great *Elixer* most of price.

25. Which as the sight of *Bazeliske* his object
Killeth, so sleiyeth it crude *Mercurie*,
When thereupon he is project,
In twinkle of an eye most sodainly,
That *Mercurie* then teineth permanently,
All bodies to Sunne and Moone perfect,
Thus guide thy base both red and white.

26. *Aurum potable* thus is made,
Of golde not commonly calcinate,
But of our tincture that will not fade,
Out of our base drawn with the menstrie circulate
But naturall calcination must algate
Be made, ere thy golde dissolved may bee,
That principle first therefore I will teach thee.

27. But into chapters this Treatise I will divide,
In number twelve with due recapitulation;
Superfluous rehearsalls Ile lay aside,
Intending onely to give true information,

Both of theoricke and practick operation:
That by my writing whoso guided will bee,
Of his intent perfectly speede shall bee.

28. The first chapter shall be of naturall *Calcination*,
The second of *Dissolution* secreat and Philosophicall,
The third of our elementall *Separation*,
The fourth of *Conjunction* matrimoniall,
The fift of *Putrification* follow shall,
Of *Congelation* albificate shalbe the sixt,
Then of *Cibation* the seaventh shall follow next.

29. The secret of *Sublimation* the eight shall show;
The ninth shall be of *firmentation*;
The tenth of our *exaltation* I trow;
The eleventh of our mervailous *multiplication*;
The twelfth of *projection*, then *recapitulation*:
And so this treatize shall take an end,
By the helpe of God as I intend.

Of Calcination.

The first Gate.

1. *Calcination* is the purgation of our stone,
Restoring also of his naturall heate,
Of radicall humiditie it looseth none,
Inducing solution into our stone most meete,
After philosophie I you behight
Doo, but not after the common guise,
With Sulphures or Salts prepare in divers wise.

2. Neither with Corosives nor with fire alone,
Neither with vineger nor with water ardent,
Nor with the vapour of leade our stone
Is calcined according to our intent:
All those to calcining which so be bent,
From this hard science withdrawe their hand,
Till they our calcining better understand.

3. For by such calcination their bodies be shent,
Which minisheth the moysture of our stone:
Therefore when bodies to powder be brent,
Dry as ashes of tree or bone,
Of such calxes then will we none;
For moysture we multiplie radicall,
In calcining minishing none at all.

4. And for a sure ground of our true calcination,
Worke wittely only kind with kind:
For kind unto kind hath appetitive inclination,
Who knoweth not this in knowledge is blind,
He may foorth wander as mist in the wind,
Wotting never with profite where to light,
Because he conceaves not our words aright.

5. Joyne kind to kind therefore as reason is,
For every burgeon answers his owne seede,
Man getteth man, a beast a beast Iwis,
Further to treat of this it is no neede.
But understand this poynt if thou wilt speede,
Each thing is first calcined in his owne kind;
This well conceived fruite therein shalt thou finde.

6. And we make Calxes* unctuous both white and red
Of three degrees or our base be perfect,
Fluxible as waxe, els stand they in no sted.
By right long processe as Philosophers doo write,
A yeare we take or more to our respite:
For in lesse space our Calxes will not be made,
Able to teyne with colour that will not fade.

7. And for thy proportion thou must beware,
For therein maist thou be beguil'd,
Therefore thy work that thou not mare,
Let thy bodie be subtilly fyl'de
With *Mercury* as much then so subtil'd,
One of the Sunne, two of the Moone,
Till altogether like papp be doone.

8. Then make the *Mercurie* foure to the Sun:
Two to the Moone as it should bee,
And thus thy worke must be begun,
In figure of the Trinitee,
Three of the bodie and of the spirite three,
And for the unitie of the substance spirituall
One moe than of the substance corporall.

9. By *Raymonds* reportory this is true,
Proportion there who list to looke,
The same my Doctor to me did shew.
But three of the spirite *Bacon* tooke,

To one of the bodie for which I awooke,
Many a night ere I it wist.
And both be true take which you list.

10. If the water also be equall in proportion
To the earth, with heate in due measure,
Of them shall spring a new burgeon,
Both white and red in pure tincture,
Which in the fire shall ever indure,
Kill thou the quick the dead revive;
Make trinitie unitie without any strive.

11. This is the surest and best proportion,
For there is least of the part spirituall,
The better therefore shall be solution,
Than if thou did it with water swall,
Thine earth over glutting which loseth all
Take heede therefore to potters loame,
And make thou never too neshe thy wombe.

12. That loame beholde how it tempred is,
The meane also how it is calcinate,
And ever in minde looke thou beare this;
That never thine earth with water be suffocate,
Drye up thy moysture with heate most temperate,
Help *Dissolution* with moysture of the Moone,
And *Congelation* with the Sunne, then hast thou doone.

13. Foure Natures into the fift so shalt thou turne,
Which is a Nature most perfect and temperate,
But hard it is with thy bare foote to spurne
Against a barr of yron, or steele new acuate,
For many doe so which be infatuate,
When they such high things take in hand,
Which they in no wise doe understand.

14. In egges, in vitriall, or in blood,
What riches wend they there to finde,
If they Philosophy understood,
They would not in working be so blinde;
Golde or silver to seeke out of kinde:
For like as fire of burning the principle* is,
So is the principle of gilding Gould I wis.

15. If thou intend therefore for to make
Gold and Silver by craft of our philosophie,
Thereto neyther egges nor bloud thou take
But Gold and Silver which naturally
Calcined wisely and not manually,
A new generation will forth bring,
Encreasing their kinde as doth every thing.

16. And if it true were that profit might be
In things which be not mettaline,
In which be coulors pleasant to see,
As in bloud, eggs, haire, urine, or wine,
Or in meane mineralls digd out of the myne,
Yet must that element be putrified and seperate,
And with Elements of perfect bodies be dispousate.

17. But first of these elements make thou rotacion,
And into water thine earth turne first of all,
Then of thy water make ayre by levigacion,
And ayre make fier, then Maister I will thee call
Of all our secrets great and small:
The wheele of Elements then canst thou turne about,
Truely conceiving our writings without doubt.

18. This done, goe backwards turning the wheele againe,
And into water turne thy fire anone,
Ayre into earth, els labourest thou in vaine,
For so to temperment is brought our stone,

And Natures contraries* foure are made one,
After they have three times been circulate,
And also thy base perfectly consumate.

19. Thus under the moysture of the Moone,
And under the temperate heate of the Sunne,
Thine Elements shalbe incinerate soone,
And then thou hast the maistrie wonne:
Thanke God thy worke was then so begunne,
For there thou hast one token trewe,
Which first in black to thee will shewe.

20. The head of the Crowe that token call wee,
And some men call it the Crowes bill;
Some call it the ashes of *Hermes* tree,
And thus they name it after their will:
Our Toade of the earth which eateth his fill,
Some nameth it by which it is mortificate
The spirit with venome intoxicate.

21. But it hath names I say to thee infinite,
For after each thing that black* is to sight,
Named it is till time it waxeth white,
Then hath it names of more delight,
After all things that been full white,
And the red likewise after the same,
Of all red things doth take the* name.

22. At the first gate now art thou in,
Of the Philosophers Castell where they dwell,
Procede wisely that thou may winne
In at moe gates of that Castell,
Which Castell is round as any bell,
And gates it hath eleven yet moe,
One is conquered, now to the second goe.

The end of the first gate.

Of Dissolution.

The second Gate.

1. Of *Dissolution* now will I speake a word or two,
Which sheweth out what erst was hid from sight,
And maketh intenuate things that were thicke also,
By vertue of our first menstrie cleare and bright,
In which our bodies eclipsed been of light,
And of their hard and drie compaction subtilate,
Into their owne first matter kindly retrograde.

2. One in gender they be, and in number two,
Whose Father is the Sunne, the Moone the Mother,
The Mover is *Mercurie*, these and no moe
Be our *Magnesia*, our *Adropp*, and none other
Things here be, but onely sister and brother,
That is to meane agent and patient,
Sulphure and *Mercury* coessentiall to our intent.

3. Betwixt these two equalitie contrarious,
Ingendred is a meane most marveilously,
Which is our *Mercury* and menstrie unctuous,
Our secreat Sulphure working invisibly,
More fiercely than fire burning the bodie,
Dissolving the bodie into water minerall,
Which night for darknes in the North we doe call.

4. But yet I trow thou understandst not utterly,
The very secreat of the Philosophers *Dissolution*,
Therefore conceive me I counsell thee wittily,
For the truth I will tell thee without delusion:
Our solution is cause of our *Congelation*;
For *Dissolution* on the one side corporall,
Causeth *Congelation* on the other side spirituall.

5. And we dissolve into water which wetteth no hand,
For when the earth is integrately incinerate,
Then is the water congealed; this understand
For the elements be so together concatenate,
That when the bodie is from his first forme alterate,
A new forme is induced immediatly,
For nothing being without all forme is utterly.

6. And heere a secret to thee I will disclose,
Which is the ground unto our secrets all,
And it not knowne thou shalt but lose
Thy labour and costs both great and small,
Take heed therefore in error that thou not fall,
The more thine earth, and the lesse thy water be,
The rather and better solution shalt thou see.

7. Behold how yce to water doth relent,
And so it must for water it was before,
Right so againe to water our earth is went,
And water thereby congeald for evermore,
For after all Philosophers that ever were bore,
Each mettall was once water mynerall,
Therefore with water they turne to water all.

8. In which water of kinde occasionate,
Of qualities been repugnant and diversitie,
Things into things must therefore be rotate,
Untill diversitie be brought to perfect unitie:
For Scripture recordeth when the earth shall be
Troubled, and into the deepe Sea shall be cast,
Mountaines and bodies likewise at the last.

9. Our bodies be likened conveniently
To mountaines, which after high Planets we name,
Into the deepnes therefore of *Mercurie*
Turne them, and keepe thee out of blame,

For then shalt thou see a noble game,
How all shall become powder as soft as silke,
So doth our rennit kindly kurd up our milke.

10. Then hath the bodies their first forme lost,
And others been induced immediatly,
Then hast thou well bestowed thy cost:
Whereas others uncunning must goe by,
Not knowing the secrets of our philosophie*:
Yet one poynt more I must tell thee,
How each bodie hath dimensions three.

11. Altitude, Latitude, and also profunditie,
By which allgates turne we must our wheele,
Knowing that thine entrance in the West shall be,
Thy passages forth to the North if thou doo weele,
And there thy lights lose their lights each deele;
For there thou must abide by ninetie nights
In darknes of purgatorie withouten lights.

12. Then take thy course up to the East anone,
By colours passing variable in manifold wise,
And then be winter and vere nigh overgone,
To the East therefore thine ascending devise,
For there the Sunne with daylight doth uprise
In sommer, and there disport thee with delight,
For there thy worke shall become perfect white.

13. Foorth from the East into the South ascend,
And set thee downe there in the chaire of fire,
For there is harvest, that is to say an end
Of all this worke after thine owne desire,
There shineth the Sunne up in his *Hemisphere*,
After the Eclipses in rednes with glorie,
As king to raigne upon all mettals and Mercurie.

14. And in one glasse must be done all this thing,
Like to an Egge in shape and closed weele,
Then must thou know the measure of firing,
The which unknowne thy worke is lost each deele:
Let never thy glasse be hotter than thou maist feele
And suffer still in thy bare hand to hold,
For feare of losing, as Philosophers have told.

15. Yet to my doctrine furthermore attend,
Beware thy glasse thou never open ne meve
From the beginning till thou have made an end;
If thou doo contrarie, thy worke may never cheve.
Thus in this Chapter which is but briefe,
I have thee taught thy true solution:
Now to the third gate goe, for this is won.

The end of the second gate.

Of Seperation.

The third Gate.

1. *Seperation* doth each part from other divide,
The subtile from the grosse, the thick from the thinn
But *Seperation* manuall looke thou set a side,
For that pertaines to fooles that little good doth winn,
But in our *Seperation* Nature doth not blinn,
Making division of qualities elementall,
Into a fift degree till they be turned all.

2. Earth is turned into water under black and bloe,
And water after into ayre under very white,
Then Aire into fire, elements there be no moe,
Of these is made our stone of great delight,
But of this *Seperation* much more must we write,
And *Seperation* is called by Philosophers definition,
Of the saide foure elements tetraptative dispersion.

3. Of this *Seperation* I finde a like figure,
Thus spoken by the Prophet in the Psalmodie,
God brought out of a stone a flood of water pure,
And out of the hardest rock oyle abundantly,
So out of our stone precious if thou be witty,
Oyle incombustable, and water thou shalt draw,
And there abouts at the coale thou needst not to blow.

4. Doe this with heate easie and nourishing,
First with moyst fire and after that with drie,
The flegme with patience out drawing,
And after that the other Natures wittely
Drye up thine earth untill it be thirsty,
By *Calcination* else labourest thou in vaine,
And then make it drink up the moysture againe.

5. *Seperation* thus must thou oftentimes make,
Thy waters dividing into partes two,
So that the subtile from the grosse thou take,
Till earth remaine beneath in colours bloe,
The earth is fixed to abide all woe,
The other parte is spirituall and flying,
But thou must turne them all into one thing.

6. Then oyle and water with water shall distill,
And through her helpe receive moving,
Keepe well these two that thou not spill
Thy worke for lack of due closing,
And make thy stopple of glasse melting,
The topp of thy vessell together with it,
Then Philosopher-like it is up shit.

7. The water wherewith thou mayst revive the stone,
Looke thou distill before thou worke with it,
Oftentimes by it selfe alone,
And by this sight thou shalt wit,
From feculent feces when it is quit:
For some men can with *Saturne* it multiplie,
And other substance which we defie.

8. Distill it therefore till it be clene
And thinne like water as it should be,
As heaven in colour bright and shene,
Keping both figure and ponderositee,
Therewith did *Hermes* moysten his tree:
Within his glasse he made it grow upright,
With flowers discoloured beautifull to sight.

9. This water is like to the venymous Tire,
Wherewith the mighty triacle is wrought,
For it is poyson most strong of Ire,
A stronger poyson cannot be thought,

At Pothecaries often therefore it is sought,
But no man by it shalbe intoxicate,
From the time it is into medicine elixerate.

10. For then as is the Triacle true,
It is of poyson most expulsive,
And in his working doth marveiles shew,
Preserving many from death to life,
But looke thou meddle it with no corosive,
But choose it pure and quick rinning,
If thou thereby wilt have winning.

11. It is a marveilous thing in kinde,
And without it can nothing be done,
Therefore *Hermes* called it his winde,
For it is up flying from Sunne and Moone,
And maketh our stone flie with it soone,
Reviving the dead and giving life,
To Sunne and Moone, husband and wife.

12. Which if they were not by craft made quick.
And their fatnes with water drawne out,
And so the thinne dissevered from the thick,
Thou shouldst never bring this worke about:
If thou wilt therefore speede without doubt,
Rayse up the birds out of their neast,
And after againe bring them to rest.

13. Water with water accord will ascend,
And spirit with spirit, for they be of one kinde,
Which after they be exalted make to discend,
So shalt thou devide that, which Nature erst did binde,
Mercury essentiall turning into winde,
Without which naturall and subtile *Seperation*,
May never be complete profitable generation.

14. Now to helpe thee in at this gate,
The last secreat I will declare to thee,
Thy water must be seaven times sublimate,
Else shall no kindly Dissolution bee,
Nor putrifying shalt thou none see;
Like liquid pitch, nor colours appearing
For lack of fire within the glasse working.

15. Foure fires there be which thou must understand,
Naturall, innaturall, against Nature also,
And elementall which doth burne the brand:
These foure fires use we and no moe,
Fire against nature must doe thy bodie woe,
This is our Dragon as I thee tell,
Fiercely burning as the fire of hell.

16. Fire of nature is the third menstruall,
That fire is naturall in each thing;
But fire occasionate, we call unnaturall,
As heate of ashes, and balnes for putrifying:
Without these fires thou maist naught bring
To Putrification, for to be seperate,
Thy matters together proportionate.

17. Therefore make fire thy glasse within,
Which burneth the bodie much more than fire
Elementall, if thou wilt winne
Our secrets according to thy desire:
Then shall thy seeds both rot and spire
By helpe of fire occasionate,
That kindly after they may be seperate.

18. Of *Seperation* the Gate must thus be wonne,
That furthermore yet thou maist proceed
Towards the Gate of secret *Conjunction*,
Into the Castle which will thee inner leed:

Of Seperation: The third Gate

Doe after my counsell if thou wilt speed,
With two strong lockes this Gate is shit,
As consequently thou shalt well wit.

The end of the third Gate.

Of Conjunction.

The fourth Gate.

1. After the Chapiter of naturall *Seperation*,
By which the elements of our stone dissevered be,
The chapter here followeth of secret *Conjunction*,
Which Natures repugnant joyneth to perfect unitie,
And so them knitteth that none from others may flie,
When they by fire shalbe examinate,
They be together* so surely conjugate.

2. And therefore Philosophers give this definition
Saying this *Conjunction* is nothing els
But of dissevered qualities a copulation,
Or of principles a coequation as others tells:
But some men with *Mercurie* that Pothecharies sells
Medleth bodies, which cannot divide
Their matter, and therefore they slip aside.

3. For until the time the soule be separte
And cleansed from his originall sinne
With the water, and throughly spiritualize,
The true *Conjunction* maist thou never begin:
Therefore the soule first from the bodie twyne,
Then of the corporall part and of the spirituall.
The soule shall cause conjunction perpetuall.

4. Of two Conjunctions Philosophers mencion make,
Grosse when the bodie with *Mercury* is reincrudate,
But let this passe, and to the second heede take,
Which as I saide is after *Seperation* celebrate,
In which the parties be left with least to colligate,
And so promoted unto most perfect temperance,
That never after amongst them may be repugnant.

5. Thus causeth *Seperation* true *Conjunction* to be had,
Of water and ayre, with earth and fire,
But that each element into other may be lad,
And so abide for ever to thy desire,
Doe as doe dawbers with clay or myre,
Temper them thick and make them not too thinne,
So doe updryng, thou shalt the rather winne.

6. But manners there be of our *Conjunction* three,
The first is called by Philosophers *Diptative*,
The which betwixt the agent and patient must be,
Male and female, *Mercury*, and *Sulphure* vive,
Matter, and forme, thinne, and thick to thrive,
This lesson will helpe thee without any doubt,
And our *Conjunction* truly to bring about.

7. The second manner is called *Triptative*,
Which is *Conjunction*, made of things three,
Of bodie, soule and spirit, that they not strive,
Which trinitie thou must bring to unitee,
For as the soule to the spirite the bond must bee;
Right so the bodie the soule to him must knit,
Out of thy minde let not this lesson flit.

8. The third manner and also the last of all,
Foure Elements together which joyne to abide,
Tetraptative certainly Philosophers doe it call,
And specially *Guido de Montano* whose fame goeth wide,
And therefore in most laudable maner this tide,
In our *Conjunction* foure Elements must aggregate
In due proportion, which first a sunder were separte.

9. Therefore like as the woman hath veines fifteene,
And the man but five to the act of their fecunditie,
Required in our *Conjunction* first I meene,
So must the man our Sunne have of his water three,

And nine his wife, which three to him must bee:
Then like with like will joy have for to dwell,
More of *Conjunction* me needeth not to tell.

10. This chapter I will conclude right soone therefore,
Grosse *Conjunction* charging thee to make but one,
For seldome have strumpets children of them ybore,
And so thou shalt never come by our stone,
Without thou let the woman lig alone,
That after she once have conceived of the man,
Her Matrix be shut up from all other than.

11. For such as adde ever more crude to crude,
Opening their vessell letting their matters keele,
The sparme conceived they nourish not but delude
Themselves, and spill their worke each deelee,
If thou therefore have list to doe weelee,
Close up thy Matrix and nourish the seede,
With heat continual and temperate if thou wilt speed.

12. And when thy vessell hath stood by moneths five,
And clowdes and Eclipses be passed each one,
The light appearing, encrease thy heate then belive,
Untill bright and shining in whitenes be thy Stone;
Then maist thou open thy glasse anone,
And feede thy childe which is ybore,
With milke and meate ay more and more.

13. For now both moist and drie is so contemperate,
That of the water earth hath received impression,
Which never (after that) asunder may be seperate;
And right so water to earth hath given ingression,
That both together to dwell have made profession,
And water of earth hath purchased a retentive,
They foure made one never more to strive.

14. Thus in two things all our intent doth hing,
In drie and moist, which be contraries two;
In drie, that it the moyst to fixing bring,
In moist, that it give liquefaction to the earth also:
Then of them thus a temperment may foorth goe,
A temperment not so thicke as the bodie is,
Neither so thinne as water withouten mis.

15. Loosing and knitting thereof be principles two
Of this hard science, and poles most principall;
Howbeit that other principles there be* many moe,
As shining fanes, which show I shall:
Procede therefore unto another wall
Of this strong Castle of our wisdomes,
That in at the fift Gate thou maist come.

The end of the fourth Gate.

Of Putrification.

The fift Gate.

1. Now we begin the chapter of *Putrification*,
Without which pole no seed may multiply,
Which must be done only by continual action
Of heate in the bodie, moyst not manually:
For bodies els may not be altered naturally,
Sith Christ doth witnes, without the graine of wheate
Dye in the ground, encrease maist thou none get.

2. And in likewise without the matter putrifie,
It may in no wise truly be alterate,
Neither thy Elements may be divided kindly,
Nor the conjunction of them perfectly celebrate:
That thy labor therefore be not frustrate,
The privitie of our putrifying well understand,
Or ever thou take this worke in hand.

3. And *Putrification* may thus defined bee
After Philosophers sayings, to be of bodies the sleying;
And in our Compound a division of things three,
The killed bodies into corruption fourth leading,
And after unto regeneration them abling,
For things being in the earth, without doubt
Be engendred of rotation of the heavens about.

4. And therefore like as I have sayd before,
Thine Elements commixt and wisely coequate,
Thou keepe in temperate heate eschewing evermore,
That they by violent heat be not incinerate
To powder drye unprofitably Rubificate,
But into powder black as a crows bill,
With heate of *Balne* or else of our dunghill.

5. Untill the time that nights be passed ninetie,
In moyst heate keepe them for any thing,
Soone after by blacknes thou shalt espie
That they draw fast to putrifying,
Which thou shalt after many colours bring
To perfect whitenes by patience easily,
And so thy seede in his nature shall multiplie.

6. Make each the other then to halse and kisse,
And like as children to play them up and downe,
And when their shirts are filed with pisse,
Then let the woman to wash be bowne,
Which oft for faintnes will fall in a swowne,
And dye at the last with her children all,
And goe to purgatorie to purge their filth originall.

7. When they be there, by little and little increase
Their paines, by heat, aye more and more,
The fire from them let never cease.
And so that thy furnace be surely apt therefore,
Which wise men call an Athenore,
Conserving heat required most temperatelie,
By which thy matter doth kindly putrifie.

8. Of this principle speaketh sapient *Guido*,
And sayth by rotting dyeth the compound corporall,
And then after *Morien* and other moe,
Upriseth againe regenerate simple and spirituall,
And were not heate and moysture continuall,
Sparme in the wombe might have none abiding,
And so there should no fruite thereof upspring.

9. Therefore at the beginning our stone thou take,
And burie each one in other within their grave,
Then equally betwixt them a marriage make,
To ligge together sixe weekes let them have,

Their seede conceived, kindly to nourish and save,
From the ground of their grave not rising that while,
Which secreat point doth many a one beguile.

10. This time of conception with easie heate abide,
The blacknes shewing shall tell thee when they dye,
For they togeather like liquid pitch that tide,
Shall swell and burble, settle and putrifie,
Shining colours therin thou shalt espie,
Like to the rainebow marveilous to sight,
The Water then beginneth to drye upright.

11. For in moyst bodies heate working temperate,
Ingendreth blacknes, first of all which is,
Of kindly *Conjunction* the token assignate,
And of true putrifying: remember this,
For then perfectly to alter thou canst not misse,
And thus by the gate of blacknes thou must come in,
The light of Paradice in whitenes if thou wilt win.

12. For first the Sunne in his uprising obscure
Shalbe, and passe the waters of *Noes* flood,
On earth which was an hundreth dayes continueate
And fiftie, away ere all these waters yood;
Right so our waters (as wisemen understood)
Shall passe, that thou with *David* may say,
Abierunt in sicco flumina: beare this away.

13. Soone after that *Noah* planted his vineyard,
Which royally flourished, and brought forth grapes anone,
After which space thou shalt not be afeard,
For in likewise shal follow the flourishing of our stone:
And soone after that xxx dayes be gone,
Thou shalt have grapes right as Rubie read,
Which is our Adropp, our Ucifer, and our red lead.

14. For like as soules after paines transitorie
Be brought to Paradice, where ever is joyfull life;
So shall our Stone (after his darknes in Purgatorie)
Be purged, and joyned in Elements withouten strife,
Rejoyce the whitenes and beautie of his wife,
And passe from darknes of purgatorie to light
Of Paradice, in whitenes Elixer of great might.

15. And that thou maist the rather to *Putrifaction* win,
This example thou take to thee for a true conclusion,
For all the secret of *Putrifaction* resteth therein;
The hart of oke that hath of water continuall infusion
Will not soone putrifie, I tell thee without delusion:
For though it in water lay 100 yeares and more.
Yet shouldst thou finde it sound as ere it was before.

16. But and thou keepe it sometime wet & sometime drie,
As thou maist see in timber by usuall experiment,
By processe of time that oke shall putrifie;
And so even likewise according to our intent,
Sometime our tree must with the Sunne be brent,
And then with water we must it keele,
That by this meanes to rotting we may bring it weelee.

17. For now in wet, and now againe in drie,
And now in heate, and now againe in colde
To be, shall cause it soone to putrifie,
And so shalt thou bring to rotting thy golde:
Intreate thy bodies as I have thee tolde,
And in thy putrifying, with heate be not too swift,
Least in the ashes thou seeke after thy thrift.

18. Therefore thy water out of the earth thou drawe,
And make the soule therewith for to ascend;
Then downe againe into the earth it throwe,
That they oft times so ascend and descend:

From violent heate and sudden colde defend
Thy glasse, and make thy fire so temperate,
That by the sides the matter be not vitrificate.

19. And be thou wise in choosing of the matter,
Meddle with no salts, sulphurs, nor meane mineralls:
For whatsoever any worker to thee doth clatter,
Our Sulphur and our Mercury been onely in metals*,
Which oyles and waters some men them calls,
Foules and birds, with other names many one,
Because that fooles should never know our stone.

20. For of this world our stone is called the sement
Which moved by craft as nature doth require,
In his encrease shall be full opulent,
And multiply his kinde after thine owne desire,
Therefore if God vouchsafe thee to inspire,
To know the truth, and fansies to eschew
Like unto thee in riches shall be but few.

21. But many men be moov'd to worke after their fantasie,
In many subjects in which be tinctures gay:
Both white and red divided manually
To fight, but in the fire they flye away:
Such breake pottes and glasses day by day,
Enpoysoning themselves and loosing their sights,
With odours, smoakes, and watching up by nights.

22. Their clothes be baudy and worne thread bare,
Men may them smell for multipliers where they goe,
To file their fingers with corosives they doo not spare,
Their eyes be bleard, their cheekes leane and blowe,
And thus for had I wist they suffer losse and woe:
And such when they have lost that was in their purse,
Then doo they chide, and Philosophers sore do curse.

23. To see their houses it is a noble sport,
What furnaces, what glasses there be of divers shapes,
What salts, what powders, what oyles, waters fort,
How eloquently *de Materia prima* their tungs do clap,
And yet to finde the truthe they have no hap;
Of our Mercurie they meddle & of our sulphure vive,
Wherein they dote, and more and more unthrive.

24. For all the while they have Philosophers bene,
Yet could they never know what was our Stone,
Some sought it in dung, in urine, some in wine,
Some in starre slyme (for thing it is but one),
In blood, in egges: some till their thrift was gone,
Dividing Elements, and breaking manie a pot,
Sheards multiplying, but yet they hit it not.

25. They talke of the red man and of his white wife,
That is a speciall thing, and of the Elixers two,
Of the Quintessence, and of the Elixer of life,
Of honie, Celidonie, and of *Secondines* also,
These they divide into Elements, with others moe;
No multipliers, but Philosophers called will they bee,
Which naturall Philosophie did never read nor see.

26. This fellowship knoweth our Stone right weele,
They thinke them richer than is the King,
They will him help, he shall not faile
Fraunce for to winne a wondrous thing,
The holy Crosse home will they bring,
And if the King were prisoner ytake,
Right soone his raunsome would they make.

27. A mervaille it is that *Westminster* Kerke,
To the which these Philosophers doo much haunt,
Since they can so much riches werke
As they make boast of and avaunt,

Drinking daylie at the wine a due taunt,
Is not made up perfectly at once;
For truly it lacketh yet many stones.

28. Fooles doo follow them at the taile,
Promoted to riches weening to bee;
But will you heare, what worship and availe
They winne in *London* that noble Citie?
With silver maces (as you may see)
Sergeants awaiteth on them each howre,
So been they men of great honour.

29. Sergeants seeke them from streete to streete,
Merchants and Goldsmiths lay after them watch,
That well is him that with them may meete,
For the great advantage that they doe catch,
They hunt about as doth a bratch,
Weening to winne so great treasure,
That ever in riches they shall endure.

30. Some would catch their goods againe,
And some more good would adventure,
Some for to have would be full faine
Of ten pounds one, I you ensure,
Some which have lent without measure
Their goods, and be with pouertie clad,
To catch a noble, would be full glad.

31. But when the Sergeants doth them arrest,
Their pautners be stuffed with *Paris* balls,
Or with signets of Saint *Martins* at the least;
But as for money it is pist against the walls:
Then be they led (as well for them befalls)
To *Newgate* or *Ludgate* as I you tell,
Because they shall in safegard dwell.

32. Where is my money become, saith one?
And where is mine, saith he and he?
But will you heare how subtill they be anone
In answering, that they excused be?
Saying, of our Elixers robbed be we,
Else might we have paid you all your golde,
Though it had been more by tenne folde.

33. And then their Creditors they flatter so,
Promising to worke for them againe
In right short space the Elixers two,
Doting the Merchants that they be faine
To let them goe, but ever in vaine;
They worke so long, till at the last,
They be againe in prison cast.

34. If any them aske, why they be not ritch?
They say they can make fine golde of tinne,
But he (say they) may surely swimme the ditch,
Which is upholden by the chinne;
We have no stock, therefore may we not winne,
Which if we had, we would soone werck
Inough to finish up *Westminster* Kerck.

35. And some of them be so devout,
They will not dwell out of that place;
For there they may withouten doubt
Doe what them list to their solace,
The Archdeacon is so full of grace,
That if they bless him with their crosse,
He forceth little of other mens losse.

36. And when they there sit at the wine,
These Monkes they say have manie a pound,
Would God (saith one) that some were mine,
Yet care away, let the cup goe round;

Drinke on saith another, the meane is found,
I am a maister of that Arte,
I warrant us we shall have part.

37. Such causeth Monkes evill to doone,
To waste their wages through their dotage,
Some bringeth a mazer, and some a spoone,
Their Philosophers giveth them such courage*,
Behighting them winning without damage*,
A pound for a penie at the least againe;
And so faire promises make fooles faine.

38. A royall medicine one upon twelve,
They promise them thereof to have,
Which they could never for them-selve
Yet bring about, so God me save:
Beware such Philosophers no man deprave,
Which helpe these Monkes to riches so,
In thread bare coates that they must goe.

39. The Abbot ought well to cherish this companie,
For they can teach his Monkes to live in pouertie,
And to goe cloathed and moneyed religiouslie,
As did Saint *Bennet*, eschuing superfluitie,
Easing them also of the ponderositie
Of their purses, with pounds so aggravate,
Which by Philosophie be now alleviate.

40. Lo who so medleth with this rich companie,
Great boast of their winning they may make:
For they shall reape as much by their Philosophie,
As they of the taile of an ape, can take:
Beware therefore for Jesus sake,
And meddle with nothing of great cost,
For if thou doe, it is but lost.

41. These Philosophers (of which I spake before)
Meddle and blunder with manie a thing,
Running in errours ever more and more,
For lacke of true understanding:
But like must like alwaies forth bring,
So hath God ordained in everie kinde;
Would Jesus they would beare this in minde.

42. Weene they of a Nettle to have a Rose,
Or of an Elder to have an apple sweete:
Alas, that wisemen their goods should lose,
Trusting such lorrells when they them meete,
Which say our Stone is troden under feete,
And maketh them vile things to distill,
Till all their howses with stench they fill.

43. Some of them never learned a word in Schooles,
Should such by reason understand Philosophie?
Be they Philosophers? Nay, they be fooles:
For their workes prove them unwittie,
Meddle not with them, if thou be happie;
Least with their flatterie they so thee till,
That thou agree unto their will.

44. Spend not thy money away in waste,
Give not to every spirit credence,
But first examine, groape, and taste;
And as thou proovest, so put thy confidence,
But ever beware of great expence:
And if the Philosopher doe live vertuouslie,
The better thou maist trust his Philosophie.

45. Proove him first, and him appose
Of all the secrets of our Stone;
Which if he knowe not, thou need not to lose,
Meddle thou no further, but let him gone,

Make he never so piteous a mone;
For then the Fox can fagge and faine,
When he would to his pray attaine.

46. If he can answere as a Clarke,
Howbeit he hath not prooved it indeed,
And thou then help him to his warke;
If he be vertuous I hold it meed,
For he will thee quite if ever he speed,
And thou shalt knowe by a little anone,
If he have knowledge of our Stone.

47. One thing, one glasse, one furnace, and no moe,
Behold this principle if he doe take,
And if he doe not, then let him goe,
For he shall never thee rich man make;
Timely it is better thou him forsake,
Than after with losse and variance,
And other manner of displeasance.

48. But if God fortune thee to have
This Science by doctrine which I have told,
Discover it not whosoever it crave,
For favour, feare, silver, or gold;
Be no oppressor, letcher nor boaster bold:
Serve thy God, and help the poore among,
If thou this life list to continue long.

49. Unto thy selfe thy secrets ever keepe
From sinners, which have not God in dread,
But will thee cast in prison deepe,
Till thou them teach to doe it indeed,
Then slaunder on thee shall spring and spread,
That thou doest coyne then will they say,
And so undoe thee for ever and aye.

50. And if thou teach them this cunning,
Their sinfull living for to maintaine,
In hell therefore shalbe thy woonning,
For God of thee and them will take disdaine:
As thou nought couldst therefore thee faine,
That bodie and soule thou maist bothe save,
And here in peace thy living to have.

51. Now in this Chapter I have thee taught,
How thou thy bodies must putrifie,
And so to guide thee that thou be not caught,
And put to durance losse or villanie:
My doctrine therefore remember wittely,
And passe forth towards the sixt Gate,
For thus the fift is triumphate.

The end of the fift Gate.

Of Congelation.

The sixt Gate.

1. *Of Congelation* I need not much to write:
But what it is, I will to thee declare;
It is of soft things induration of colour white,
And confixation of spirits which flying are;
How to congeale, thee* needeth not much to care,
For Elements will knit together soone,
So that Putrifaction be kindly doone.
2. But Congelations be made in divers wise,
Of spirits and bodies dissolved to water cleare,
Of salts also dissolved twice or thrise,
And then congeald into a fluxible matter;
Of such congealing, fooles fast doo clatter,
And some dissolveth dividing manuallie
Elements, them after congealing to powder drie.
3. But such congealing is not to our desire,
For unto ours it is contrarious,
Our congelation dreadeth not the fire:
For it must ever stand in it unctuous,
And it is also a tincture so bounteous,
Which in the aire congealed will not relent
To water, for then our worke were shent.
4. Moreover congeale not into so hard a stone
As glasse or christall, which melteth by fusion,
But so that it like waxe will melt anone
Withouten blast: and beware of delusion,
For such congealing accordeth not to our conclusion
As will not flowe, but runne to water againe
Like salt congealed, then labourest thou in vaine.

5. Which congelation availeth us not a deale,
It longeth to multipliers, congealing vulgarly:
If thou therefore list to doe weele
(Sith the medicine shall never flowe kindly,
Neither congeale, without thou first it putrifie)
First purge, and then fixe the elements of our stone,
Till they together congeale and flowe anone.

6. For when thy matter is made perfectly white,
Then will the spirit with the bodie congealed be:
But of that time thou maist have long respite
Or it congeale like pearles in sight to thee,
Such congelation be thou glad to see,
And afterlike graines red as blood,
Richer than any worldly good.

7. The earthly grosenes therefore first mortified,
In moysture blacknes ingendred is;
This principle may not be denied,
For naturall Philosophers so sayne ywis:
Which had, of whitenes thou maist not mis;
And into whitenes if thou congeale it once,
Then hast thou a stone most precious of all stones.

8. And by the drie like as the moist did putrifie,
Which caused in colour blacknes to appeare,
Right so the moyst congealed by the drie,
Ingendreth whitenes shining by night full cleare,
And drines proceedeth as whiteth the matter,
Like as in blacknes moysture doth him shew
By colours variant alwayes new and new.

9. The cause of all this is heate most temperate,
Working and moving the matter continually,
And thereby also the matter is alterate,
Both inward and outward substantially,

Not as doo fooles to fight sophistically;
But in everie part all fire to endure,
Fluxible, fixt, and stable in tincture.

10. As Phisicke determineth of each digestion,
First done in the stomach in which is drines,
Causing whitenes without question,
Like as the second digestion causeth rednes,
Complete in the liver by heate in temperatenes,
Right so our Stone by drines and by heate
Digested is to white and red compleate.

11. But here thou must another secret knowe,
How the Philosophers childe in the ayre is borne,
Busie thee not too fast at the coale to blowe,
And take this neither for mocke nor scorne,
But trust me truly, else is all thy worke forlorne,
Without thine earth with water revived bee,
Our true congealing shalt thou never see.

12. A soule it is betwixt heaven and earth being,
Arising from the earth as ayre with water pure,
And causing life in everie lively thing,
Incessable running upon our foure fold nature,
Enforcing to better him with all his cure,
Which ayre is the fire of our Philosophie,
Named now oyle, now water mysticallie.

13. And this meane ayre which oyle or water we call,
Our fire, our oyntment, our spirit, and our Stone,
In which one thing we ground our wisdomes all,
Goeth neither in nor out alone,
Nor the fire but the water anone:
First it out leadeth, and after it bringeth it in,
As water with water which will not lightly twin.

14. And so may water only our water meeve,
Which moving causeth both death and life
And water to water doth kindly cleave
Without repugnance or anie strife,
Which water to fooles is nothing rife,
Being of the kinde withouten doubt
Of the spirit, called water and leader out.

15. And water is the secret and life of every thing,
That is of substance in this world yfound,
For of water each thing hath his beginning,
As showeth in women when they shalbe unbound
By water, which passeth before if all be sound,
Called *Albien*, first from them running,
With greevous throwes before their childing.

16. And truly that is the cause most principall
Why Philosophers charge us to be patient,
Till time the water be dried to powder all
With nourishing heate, continuall, not violent:
For qualities be contrarious of everie element,
Till after blacke in white be made an union
Of them for ever, congeald without division.

17. And furthermore, the preparation of this conversion:
From thing to thing, from one state to another,
Is done onely by kindly and discreete operation
Of Nature, as is of sperme within the mother;
For sperme and heate, are as sister and brother,
Which be converted in themselves as nature can,
By action and passion at last to perfect man:

18. For as the bodily part by nature was combynate
Into man, is such as the beginner was,
Which though it thus from thing to thing was alterate
Not out of kinde, to mixe with other kinde did passe,

And so our matter spermaticall within our glasse,
Within it selfe must turne from thing to thing,
By heate most temperate only it nourishing.

19. An other example naturall I may thee tell,
How the substance of an egge by nature is wrought
Into a Chicken not passing out of the shell,
A plainer example could I not have thought,
And their conversions be made till forth be brought
From state to state, the like by like in kinde,
With nourishing heate: onely beare this in minde.

20. Another example here also thou maist read
Of vegetable things, taking consideration,
How everie thing groweth of his owne seede
Through heate and moysture, by naturall operation;
And therfore myneralls be nourished by ministration
Of moysture radicall, which there beginning was,
Not passing their kinde within one glas.

21. There we them turne from thing to thing againe,
Into their mother the water when they goe:
Which principle unknowen, thou labourest in vaine.
Then all is sperme; and things there be no moe
But kinde with kinde in number two,
Male and female, agent and patient,
Within the matrix of the earth most orient.

22. And these be turned by heate from thing to thing
Within one glasse, and so from state to state,
Untill the time that nature doth them bring
Into one substance of the water regenerate:
And so the sperme with his kinde is alterate,
Able in likenes his kinde to multiply,
As doth in kinde all other things naturally.

23. In the time of this said proces naturall,
While that the sperme conceived is growing,
The substance is nourished with his owne menstruall,
Which water only out of the earth did spring,
Whose colour is greene in the first showing:
And from that time the Sunne hideth his light,
Taking his course throughout the North by night.

24. The sayd menstruall is (I say to thee in counsell)
The blood of our greene Lyon and not of vitriall,
Dame *Venus* can the troth of this thee tell,
At the beginning, to counsell if thou her call,
This secret is hid by Philosophers great and small,
Which blood drawne out of the greene Lyon,
For lack of heate had not perfect digestion.

25. But this blood called our secreat menstruall,
Wherewith our sperme is nourished temperately,
When it is turned into the feces corporall,
And so become white perfectly and very drye,
Congeald and fixed into his owne bodie,
Then biscocct blood to sight it may well seeme,
Of this worke named the milke white Dyademe.

26. Understand now that our frie water thus acuate,
Is called our menstruall water, wherein
Our earth is loosed and naturally calcinate,
By Congelation that they may never twinne,
But yet to congeale more water thou may not blin*:
Into three partes of the acuate water sayd afore,
With the fourth parte of the earth congealed and no more.

27. Unto that substance therefore so congeate,
The fourth parte put of water christaline,
And make them then together to be dispousate,
By Congelation into a miner metaline,

Which like a sworde new slipped will shine,
After the blacknes which first will shew,
The fourth parte then give it of water new.

28. Imbibitions many it must have yet,
Give it the second, and after the third also.
The sayd proportion keeping in thy witt,
Then to another the fourth time looke thou goe,
The fift time and the sixt passe not therefore,
But put two partes at each time of them three,
And at the seventh time five partes must there bee.

29. When thou hast made seaven times Imbibition,
Againe then must thou turne about thy wheele,
And putrifie all that matter without addition,
First blacknes abiding if thou wilt doe weele,
Then into whitenes congeale it up each deele,
And after by rednes into the south ascend,
Then hast thou brought thy base unto an end.

30. Thus is thy water then divided into partes two,
With the first parte the bodies be putrificate,
And to thine Imbibitions the second parte must goe,
With which thy matter is afterwarde demigrate,
And soone upon easie decoction albificate,
Then is it named by Philosophers our starry stone,
Bring that to rednes then is the sixt gate wonne.

The end of the sixt gate.

Of Cibation.

The seventh Gate.

1. Now of *Cibation* I turne my pen to write,
Sith it must here the seventh place occupie:
But in few words it wilbe expedite,
Take heede therefore, and understand me wittellie;
Cibation is called a feeding of our matter drie,
With milke and meate, which moderately thou doe,
Until it be brought the third order unto.

2. But give it never so much, that thou it glut;
Beware of dropsey, and also of *Noahs* flood:
By little and little therefore thou to it put
Of meate and drinke, as seemes to doo it good,
That watry humours not overgrow the blood,
To drinke therefore let it be measured so,
That kindly appetite thou never quench it fro.

3. For if it drinke too much, then must it have
A vomit or els it wilbe sick too long,
From the dropsie therefore thy wombe thou save,
And from the flix, or else it wilbe wrong,
But rather let it thirst for drinke among,
Than thou shouldst give it overmuch at once.
Which must in youth be dieted for the nonce.

4. And if thou diet it (as nature doth require)
Moderately, till time that it be growen to age,
From colde it keeping, and nourishing with moyst fire,
Then shall it growe, and wexe full of courage,
And doe to thee both pleasure and advantage:
For he shall make darke bodies whole and bright,
Cleansing their leprosies through his might.

5. Three times must thou turne about thy wheele,
Still keeping the rule of the said *Cibation*,
And then as soone as it the fire doth feele,
Like waxe it wilbe readie unto liquation:
This chapter needeth no longer protestation,
For I have tolde thee the dietorie most convenient,
After thine Elements be made equipolent.

6. And also how to whitenes thou shalt bring thy golde,
Most like in figure to leaves of hawthorne tree
Called *Magnesia*, afore as I have tolde,
And our white Sulphure without combustibilitie,
Which from the fire away will never flie.
And thus the seventh Gate (as you desired)
In the uprising of the Sunne is conquered.

The end of the seventh Gate.

Of Sublimation.

The eight Gate.

1. Here of our *Sublimation* a word or two
I have to speake, which the eight Gate is.
Fooles doo sublime, but sublime thou not so,
For we sublime not as they doe ywis:
To sublime truly therefore thou shalt not mis,
If thou canst make thy bodies first spirituall,
And then thy spirits (as I have taught thee) corporall.

2. Some doe Mercurie from vitrioll and salt sublime,
And other spirits from scales of yron and steele,
From egg-shels calcined, and from quick lime,
And in their manner yet sublime they right weele:
But such subliming accordeth never a deelee
To our intents, for we sublime not so,
To true subliming therefore, now will I goe.

3. In *Sublimation* first beware of one thing,
That thou sublime not* to the top of the vessell:
For without violence thou shalt it not downe bring
Againe, but there it will abide and dwell,
So it rejoyceth with refrigeration I thee tell,
Keepe it therefore with temperate heate adowne
Full fortie dayes, till it wexe blacke and browne.

4. For then the soule beginneth to come out
From his owne veynes, for all that subtill is
Will with the spirite ascend withouten doubt,
Beare in thy minde therefore, and thinke on this,
How here eclipsed been thy bodies,
As they doe putrifie subliming more and more
Into water, untill they be all up ybore.

5. And thus their venome when they have spued out
Into the water then blacke it doth appeare,
Becomming spirituall each deale without doubt,
Subliming easilie in our manner,
Into the water, which doth him beare:
For in the ayre our childe must thus be bore
Of the water againe, as I have said before.

6. But when these two by Sublimation continuall
Be laboured so with heate both moyst and temperate,
That all is white and purely made spirituall,
Then heaven upon earth must be reiterate
Untill the soule with the bodie be incorporate
That earth become all that before was heaven,
Which wilbe done in Sublimations seaven.

7. And Sublimations we make for causes three,
The first cause is, to make the bodie spirituall;
The second is, that the spirite may corporall bee,
And become fixt with it, and consubstantiall;
The third cause is, that from his filthie originall
He may be cleansed, and his saltnes sulphurious
May be minished in him, which is infectious.

8. Then when they thus together depured be,
They will sublime up whiter than the snowe;
That sight will greatly comfort thee:
For then anon perfectly thou shalt knowe
The spirits shall so adowne ythrowe,
That this eight Gate shalbe to thee unlocked,
Out of the which many be shut and mocked.

The end of the eight Gate.

Of Firmentation.

The ninth Gate.

1. True *Firmentation* few Workers understand,
That secret therefore I will expound to thee,
I travailed truly through manie a Land,
Ere ever I might finde any that would tell it mee:
Yet as God would, evermore blessed be hee,
At the last I came to the knowledge thereof perfite,
Take heede therefore what I thereof doe write.
2. Firmentations in divers manners be doone,
By which our medicine must be perpetuate
Into cleere water: some looseth Sunne and Moone,
And with their medicines make them to be congregate;
Which in the fire when they be examine
May not abide, nor alter with complement:
For such Firmenting is not to our intent.
3. But yet more kindly some other men doone,
Fermenting their medicines in this wise,
In Mercurie dissolving both Sunne and Moone,
Till time with the spirit they will arise,
Subliming them together twice or thrice;
Then *Fermentation* therewith they make:
That is a way, but yet we it forsake.
4. Some other there be which have more hap,
To touch the troth in part of fermenting,
They amalgame their bodies with Mercurie like pap,
Then thereupon their medicines relenting:
These of our secrets have some henting.
But not the truth with perfect complement,
Because they neither putrifie, nor alter their Ferment.

5. That poynt therefore I will disclose unto thee,
Looke how thou didst with thine unperfect bodie,
Doe so with thy perfect bodies in each degree,
That is to say, first thou them putrifie,
Their former qualities destroying utterly,
For this is wholly to our intent,
That first thou alter before thou ferment.

6. To thy compound make firment the fourth part,
Which ferments been only of Sunne and Moone;
If thou therefore be maister of this Arte,
Thy Fermentation let thus be doone,
Fixe water and earth together soone,
And when thy medicine as waxe doth flowe,
Then upon amalgams* looke thou it throwe.

7. And when all that together is mixed,
Above the glasse well closed make thy fire,
And so continue it till all be fixed,
And well fermented to thy desire,
Then make Projection after thy pleasure,
For that is medicine each deale perfite,
Thus must thou ferment both red and white.

8. For like as flowre of wheate made into paste
Requireth ferment, which leaven we call
Of bread, that it may have the kindly taste,
And become foode to man and woman cordiall:
Right so thy medicine ferment thou shall,
That it may taste of the Ferment pure,
At all assayes for ever to endure.

9. And understand that there be Ferments three,
Two be of bodies in nature cleene,
Which must be altred as I have told thee;
The third most secret of which I meene,

Is the first earth of his water greene:
And therefore when the Lion doth thirst,
Make him to drinke till his belly burst.

10. Of this a Question if I should moove,
And aske of workers, what is this thing?
Anon thereby I should them proove,
If they had knowledge of our fermenting:
For manie a man speaketh with wondring,
Of Robin hood and of his bowe,
Which never shot therein I trowe.

11. For *Fermentation* true as I thee tell,
Is of the soule with the bodies incorporation,
Restoring to it the kindly smell,
With tast and colour by naturall conspissation,
Of things dissevered, a due reintegration,
Whereby the bodie of the spirit taketh impression,
That either the other may help to have ingression.

12. For like as bodies in their compaction corporall,
May not shewe out their qualities effectually,
Untill the time that they become spirituall,
No more may spirits abide with bodies stedfastly,
Till they with them be confixate proportionally,
For then the bodie teacheth the spirit to suffer fire,
And the spirit the bodie to enter to thy desire.

13. Therefore thy gold with gold thou must ferment,
With his owne water thy earth cleansed I meene,
Nought else to say but element with element,
The spirit of life onely going betweene,
For like as an adamant as thou hast seene
Draweth yron to him, so doth our earth by kinde,
Drawe downe to him his soule borne up with winde.

14. With winde therefore the soule lead out and in,
Mingle gold with gold, that is for to say,
Make Element with Element together rin
Till time all fire they suffer may,
For earth is Ferment withouten nay
To water, and water the earth unto,
Our Fermentation in this wise must be doe.

15. Earth is gold, and so is the soule also
Not common, but ours thus Elementate,
And yet thereto the Sunne must goe,
That by our wheele it may be alterate:
For so to ferment it must be preparete,
That it profoundly may joyned bee,
With other natures as I said to thee.

16. And whatsoever I have here said of gold,
The same of silver I will thou understand,
That thou them putrifie and alter (as I have told)
Ere thou thy medicine to firment take in hand:
Forsooth I could never finde him in *England*
Which in this wise to firment could me teach
Withouten error, by practise or by speach.

17. Now of this chapter needeth to treat no more,
Sith I intend prolixitie to eschew;
Remember well my words therefore,
Which thou shalt prove by practise trew,
And Sunne and Moone looke thou renew,
That they may hold of the fift nature,
Then shall their tincture evermore endure.

18. And yet a way there is most excellent,
Belonging unto another working,
A water we make most redolent,
All bodies to oyle wherewith we bring,

With which our medicine we make flowing,
A quintessence this water we call,
In man which healeth diseases all.

19. But with thy base, after my doctrine preperate
Which is our calx this must be done,
For when our bodies be so calcinate,
That water will to oyle dissolve them soone,
Make thou therefore oyle both of Sunne and Moone,
Which is ferment most fragrant for to smell.
And so the ninth gate is conquered of this Castell.

The end of the ninth Gate.

Of Exaltation.

The tenth Gate.

1. Proceede we now to the chapter of *Exaltation*,
Of which truly thou must have knowledge pure,
But little it is different from *Sublimation*,
If thou conceive it right I you ensure,
Hereto accordeth the holy scripture,
Christ saying thus, if I exalted be,
Then shall I draw all things unto me.

2. Our medicine if we exalt right so,
It shalbe thereby nobilitate,
That must be done in manners two,
From time the parties be dispousate,
Which must be crucified and examine,
And then contumulate both man and wife,
And after revived by the spirit of life.

3. Then up to heaven they must exalted be,
There to be in bodie and soule glorificate,
For thou must bring them to such subtiltie,
That* they ascend together to be intronizate,
In cloudes of clearenes to Angels consociate,
Then shall they draw as thou shalt see,
Al other bodies to their owne dignitee.

4. If thou therefore the bodies wilt exalt,
First with the spirit of life thou them augment,
Till* time the earth be well subtilizate,
By naturall rectifying of every Element,
Them up exalting into the firmament,
Then much more precious shall they be than gold,
Because of the quintessence which they doe holde.

5. For when the colde hath overcome the heate,
Then into water the Ayre shall turned be,
And so two contraries together shall meete,
Till either with other* right well agree,
So into Ayre the water as I tell thee,
When heate of colde hath got domination,
Shall be converted by craft of our circulation.

6. And of the fier then aire* have thou shall,
By loosing putrifying and subliming,
And fire thou hast of the earth materiall,
Thine Elements thus by craft dissevering,
Most especially thine earth well calcining,
And when they be each one made pure,
Then doe they holde all of the first nature.

7. On this wise therefore make them be circulate,
Each into other exalting by and by,
And all in this one glasse surely sigillate,
Not with thine hands, but as I teach thee naturally,
Fire into water then turne first hardly,
For fire is in Ayre, which is in water existent,
And this conversion accordeth to our intent.

8. Then furthermore turne on thy wheele,
That into earth the ayre converted be,
Which will be done also right well,
For Ayre is in water being in earth trust me,
The water into fire contrarious in her qualitie,
Soone turne thou mayst for water in earth is,
Which is in fire, conversion true is this.

9. The wheele is now neere turned about,
Into ayre turne earth which is the proper nest,
Of other Elements there is no doubt,
For earth in fire is, which in ayre taketh rest,

This circulation beginne thou in the west,
Then into the south, till they exalted bee,
Proceede duely, as in thy figure I have taught thee.

10. In which processe clearely thou mayst see,
From one extreame how to another thou mayst not go,
But by a meane, since they in qualities contrarious be,
And reason will forsooth that it be so,
As heate into colde, with other contraries mo,
Without their meanes as moyst to heate and colde,
Examples sufficient before this I have tolde.

11. Thus have I taught thee how to make
Of all thine Elements a perfect circulation,
And at thy figure example to take,
How thou shalt make this foresaide *Exaltation*,
And of thy medicine in the Elements true graduation,
Till it be brought to a quality* temperate,
And then thou hast conquered the tenth gate.

The end of the tenth Gate.

Of Multiplication.

The eleventh Gate.

1. *Multiplication* now to declare I proceede,
Which is by Philosophers in this wise defined
Augmentation it is of the Elixer indeede,
In goodnes and quantitie both for white and red,
Multiplication is therefore as they doe write,
That thing that doth augment medicines in each degree,
In colour, in odour, in vertue and also in quantitee.

2. And why thou mayst this medicine multiplie,
Infinitely forsooth the cause is this,
For it is fire, which kindled will never die,
Dwelling with thee, as fire doth in houses,
Of which one sparke may make more fire ywis,
As muske in pigments and other spices mo,
In vertue multiplied, and our medicine right so.

3. So he is rich which fire hath lesse or more,
Because he may so hugely it multiply,
And right so rich is he which any parte hath in store,
Of our Elixers which be augmentable infinitely,
One way if thou dissolve our pouders drye,
And make often times of them Congelation,
Thereof in goodnes then makest thou Augmentation.

4. The second way both in goodnes and quantitie,
It multiplyeth by iterate *Fermentation*,
As in that chapter I shewed plainely to thee,
By divers manners of naturall operation,
And also in the chapter of our *Cibation*,
Where thou mayst know how thou shalt multiplie,
Thy medicine with Mercurie infinitely.

5. But and thou wilt both loose and eke ferment,
Both more in quantitie and better will it be:
And in such wise thou mayst it soone augment,
That in thy glasse it will growe like a tree,
The tree of *Hermes* named seemely to see,
Of which one pippin a thousand will multiplie,
If thou canst make thy projection wittely.

6. And like as Saffron when it is pulverizate,
By little and little if it with liquor be
Tempred, and then with much more liquor dilate,
Teyneth much more of liquor in quantitie,
Than being whole in his grosse nature: so shalt thou see,
That our Elixer, the more it is made thinne,
The further in tincture it fastly will rinne.

7. Keepe in thy fire therefore both even and morrow,
From house to house that thou neede not to rinne,
Among thy neighbours thy fire to seeke or borrow,
The more thou keepst, the more good shalt thou win
Multiplying it alwaies more & more thy glasse within,
By feeding with Mercurie unto thy lives end,
So shalt thou have more than thou needest to spend.

8. This matter is plaine I will no more
Write thereof, let reason thee guide,
Be never the bolder to sinne therefore,
But serve thy God the better in each tide:
And while that thou shalt in this life abide,
Beare this in minde, forget not I thee pray,
As thou shalt appeare before God at domes day.

9. His owne great giftes therefore and his treasure,
Dispose thou vertuously, helping the poore at neede,
That in this world thou mayst to thee procure,
Mercy and grace with heavenly blisse to meede,

Of Multiplication: The eleventh Gate

And pray to God devoutly that he thee leade,
In at the twelfth gate, as he can best,
Soone after then thou shalt end thy conquest.

The end of the eleventh gate.

Of Projection.

The twelfth Gate.

1. In Projection it shal be proved if our practise be profitable,
Of which it behoveth me the secrets here to move,
Therefore if thy tincture be sure and not variable,
By a little of thy medicine thus mayst thou prove,
With mettle, or with Mercury as pitch it will cleave,
And teyne in Projection all fires to abide,
And soone it will enter and spread him full wide.
2. But many by ignorance doe marre that they made,
When on mettals unclensed Projection they make,
For because of corruption their tinctures must fade,
Which they would not away first from the body take,
Which after Projection be brittle blew and black,
That thy tincture therefore may evermore last,
First upon ferment thy medicine see thou cast.
3. Then brittle as glasse will thy ferment bee,
Upon bodies clensed and made very pure,
Cast that brittle substance and soone shalt thou see,
That they shall be curiously coloured with tincture,
With all assayes for ever shall endure,
But profitable Projection perfectly to make,
At the Psalmes of the Psalter example thou take.
4. On *Fundamenta* cast first this psalme *Nunc dimittis*,
Upon *verba mea*, then cast *Fundamenta* belive,
Then *Verba* upon *diligam*, conceive me with thy wits,
And *diligam* upon *attendite*, if thou list to thrive,
Thus make thou Projections, three, foure, or five,
Till the tincture of the medicine beginne to decrease,
And then it is time of Projection to cease.

5. By this mistie talking I meane nothing else,
But that thou must cast first the lesse on the more,
Encreasing aye the number as wisemen thee tells,
And keepe thou this secreat unto thy selfe in store,
Be covetous of cunning it is no burden sore,
For he that joyneth not the Elixer with bodies made cleane,
He wotteth not surely what Projection doth meane.

6. Ten if thou multiplie first into ten,
One hundreth that number maketh sickerly,
If one hundreth into an hundreth be multiplied, then
Ten thousand is that number if thou count it wittely,
Then into as much more ten thousand to multiplie,
It is a thousand thousand; which multiplied ywis,
Into as much more a hundreth million is.

7. That hundreth millions being multiplied likewise
Into ten thousand millions, as I to thee doe say,
Maketh so great a number I wot not what it is,
Thy number in Projection thus multiplie alway:
Now childe of thy curtesie for me that thou pray,
Sith I have tolde thee our secrets all and some,
To the which I beseech G O D by grace thou mayst come.

8. Now hast thou conquered these gates twelve,
And all the Castle thou holdest at thy will,
Keepe thy secreats in store to thy selfe,
And the commaundements of God looke thou fulfill,
In fire see thou continue thy glasses still,
And multiply thy medicines aye more and more,
For wise men doe say, that store is no sore.

*The ende of the twelve Gates, intituled
Ripleys Compound of Alchymie.*

Recapitulatio totius operis prædicti.

1. For to bring this Treatise to a finall ende,
And briefly here to conclude these secrets all,
Diligently looke thou, and to thy figure attend,
Which doth in it containe these secrets great & small,
And if thou it conceive, both theoricall and practicall,
By figures and colours, by scripture plaine,
It wittily conceived, thou mayst not worke in vaine.
2. Consider first the latitude of this precious Stone,
Beginning in the first side noted in the West,
Where the red man & the white woman be made one,
Spoused with the spirite of life to live in rest,
Earth and water equally proportionate, that is best,
And one of the earth is good, and of the spirit three,
Which twelve to fowre also of the earth may bee.
3. Three of the wife, and one of the man thou take,
And the lesse of the spirit in this dispousation,
The rather thy Calcination for certain shalt thou make;
Then forth into the North proceed by obscuracion
Of the red man and his white wife, called Eclipsation,
Loosing them and altring them betwixt winter & vere,
Into water turning earth, darke and nothing cleare.
4. From thence by colours many one into the East ascend,
Then shall the Moone be full appearing by day-light,
Then is she passed purgatorie, and her course at an end,
There is the uprising of the Sunne appearing bright,
There is Summer after Vere, and day after night:
Then earth & water which wer black, be turned to aire,
And clouds of darknes overblown, & all apareth faire.

5. And as in the west was the beginning of thy practise,
And the North the perfect meane of profound alteration:
So in the East after them the beginning of speculation is;
But of this course up in the south the sun maketh consumation,
Ther bin the elements turned into fire by circulation:
Then to win to thy desire thou needst not be in doubt,
For the wheele of our philosophie thou hast turned about.

6. But yet about againe two times turne thy wheele,
In which bin comprehended all the secrets of our philosophy.
In chapters 12. made plaine to thee, if thou conceive them well,
And all the secrets by & by of our lower Astronomy,
How thou shalt calcine bodies, perfit, dissolve divide &
putrifie,
With perfect knowledge of all the poles which in our heaven
beene,
Shining with colours inexplicable, never were gayer seene.

7. And thus our secret conclusion know withouten faile,
Our red man teineth not, nor his wife, til they teined be,
Therefore if thou list thy selfe by this craft to availe,
The altitude of the bodies hide, & shewe out their profunditie,
In every of thy materials destroying the first qualitie,
And secondary qualities more glorious in them repaire anone,
And in one glasse, and with one rule, foure natures turn to one.

8. Pale & black with false citrine, imperfect white & red,
The Peacocks feathers in colours gay, the Rainebowe which shall
overgoe,
The spotted panther, the lyon green, the crowes bil blue as lead,
These shall apeare before thee perfect white, and manie other
moe,
And after the perfect white, gray, false citrine also,
And after these, then shall apeare the body red invariable,
Then hast thou a medicine of the thirde order of his owne kinde
multiplicable.

9. Thou must divide thy white Elixer into parts two
Before thou rubifie, & into glasses two let them be doone,
If thou wilt have for Sun & moon thy elixer both do so;
And into mercury them multiply to great quantity soone,
And if thou had not at the beginning to fill a spoone,
Yet maist thou them so multiply both white and red.
That if thou live a 1000.yeres, they shal stand thee in sted.

10. Have thou recourse to thy wheele therefore I counsell thee,
And studie him well to know in each chapter truly,
Meddle with no phantasticall multipliers, but let them be,
Which will thee flatter feining them cunning in Philosophie,
Doe as I bid thee, then dissolve these foresaid bases wittilie,
And turne them into perfect oyles with our true water ardent,
By circulation that must be done according to our intent.

11. These oyles will fixe crude Mercurie and convert bodies all
Into perfect Sunne and Moone, when thou shalt make Projection;
That oylie substance pure & fixt *Raimond Lully* did call
His *Basiliske*, of which he never made so plain detection:
Pray for me to God, that I may be one of his election,
And that he will for one of his, at doomesday me ken,
And graunt me his blisse to raigne with him for ever. Amen.

Finis Recapitulationis.

An Admonition, wherein the Author declareth his erronious Experiments.

1. After all this, I will thou understand
For thy savegard, what I have doone,
Manie experiments have I taken in hand
As I found written for Sunne and Moone:
The which I will tell thee, rehearsing soone,
Beginning at the vermillion, which proved nought,
And Mercurie sublimed, which I dearly bought.

2. I made solutions full manie a one
Of spirits, ferments, salts, yron, and steele,
Weening so to make the Philosophers Stone:
But finally I lost every deele,
After my bookes yet wrought I weele,
Which evermore untrue I preeved,
Which made me oft full sore agreed.

3. Waters corsive and waters ardent,
With which I wrought in divers wise,
Manie one I made, but all were shent,
Egg-shells I calcined twice or thrise,
Oyles from Calxes I made up to rise,
And every Element I did from other twin,
But profit found I none therein.

4. Also I wrought in sulphure and vitriall,
Which fooles doe call the greene Lyon,
In Arsinike, in orpiment, foule them befall,
In debili principio was my inception,
Therefore in fine, was fraude my conclusion:
And thus I blew my thrift at the cole,
My cloathes were bawdie, my stomacke never whole.

5. Sal Armoniacke, and Sandivere,
Sal Alcalie, Sal allembroke, and Sal attinckarre,
Sal tartar, salt common, Sal gem most cleare,
Salt Peter, salt sod, of these beware,
And from the odour of quicksilver keepe thee farre,
Meddle not with Mercurie precipitate,
Neither with imperfect bodies rubificate.

6. I prooved urine, eggs, haire and blood,
The soule of Saturne, and also of markazite,
AEs ust, and Crokefeere, which did me never good,
And the scales of yron which Smithes of smite,
Litarge and Antimonie, not worth a mite;
Of the which gay tinctures did I shew,
Both red and white, which were untrew.

7. Oyle of lyme, and water with labour great
I made, calcining it with salt preperate,
And by it selfe with violent heate,
Grinding with vineger till I was fatigate,
And also with *aqua vitæ*, with spices acuate
Upon a marble Stone, which stood me in cost,
And oyles with corosives I made; but all was lost.

8. Manie an amalgam* did I make,
Weening to fixe them to great availe,
And thereto Sulphure did I take,
Tartar, egges, whites, and oyle of the snayle,
But ever of my purpose did I faile,
For what for the more, and what for the las,
Evermore something wanting there was.

9. Wine and milke, oyles and rennyt,
The slyme of starres that fall on ground,
Celedonie with Secundines and many mo yet;
In these I practised as I in bookes found,

I wan right nought, but lost many a pound,
Of Mercurie and mettalls I made christall stones,
Weening it had been a worke for the nones.

10. Thus I rosted and broyled, as one of *Gebers* cookes,
Oft times in the asshes my winning I sought,
For I was deceived by manie false bookes,
Whereby untruth truly I wrought,
But all such experiments availed me right nought,
But brought me in danger and encumbrance,
By losse of my goods and other greivance.

11. For the love of our Ladie such lewdnes eschew,
And medle with no falshood, that never proved weele,
Assay when thee liketh, and thou shalt finde it trew,
Winne shalt thou right nought, but lose everie deele,
Pence in thy purse pawtner few shalt thou feele,
In smokes and in smels thou shalt have much woe,
That unneth for sicknes on earth thou shalt goe.

12. I sawe never true worke truly but one,
Of which in this Treatise the truth I have told:
Studie only therefore how to make our Stone,
For thereby maist thou winne both silver and gold,
Upon my writing therefore, to ground thee be bold:
So shalt thou loose nought if God be thy guide,
Trust to my doctrine, and thereby abide.

13. Remember that Man is most noble creature
Of earthly composition, that ever God wrought,
In whom is the foure Elements, proportioned by nature,
A naturall Mercurialitie, which costeth right nought,
Out of his myne* by arte it is brought;
For our mettalls be nought els but our myners two,
Of Sunne and Moone, wise *Raymond* said so.

14. The clearnes of the Moone, and of the Sunne so bright,
Into these two myners descendeth secretly,
Howbeit the clearnes is hid from thy sight,
Which by craft thou shalt make it to appeare openly:
This hid Stone, this one thing therefore putrifie,
And wash him in his owne broth till white he become;
Then ferment him wittily; loe here is all and some.

15. Now to God Almightye I thee commend,
Who graunt thee grace to knowe this one thing;
For now is this Treatise brought to an end:
And God for his mercie to his blisse us bring,
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus where the Angells doe sing,
Praising without ceasing his glorious Majestie,
Which he in his Kingdome graunt us for to see.

Amen quod George Ripley.

The Epistle by the same Author
written to King Edward the 4.

1. O Honorable Lord, and most victorious Knight,
With grace and vertue abundantly endewed,
The safegard of *England*, and maintainer* of right;
That God you loveth, indeed he hath well shewed:
Wherefore I trust this land shalbe renewed
With joy and riches, with charitie and peace,
So that olde ranckors new understrewed,
Tempestuous troubles, and wretchednes shall cease.
2. And therefore sith I see by tokens right evident,
That God you guideth, and how that you be vertuous,
Hating sinne, and all such as be insolent,
How that also manslaughter to you is odious,
Upon the judgement also that you be piteous:
Me seemeth ruthe it were but that you should live long;
For of your great fortune you are not presumptuous,
Nor vengeable of spirit to revenge you of each wrong.
3. These considered with others in your most noble State,
Like as God knoweth, and people doo witnes beare,
So entirely me mooveth, that I must algate
Record the same, and therein be no flatterer:
And not that only, but also to write here
Unto your Highnes, humbly to present
Great secrets, which in farre countries I did learne,
And which by grace to me most unworthie are lent.
4. Once to your Lordship such things I did promise,
What time you did commaund to send unto me,
And sith that I wrote it in secret wise,
Unto your grace from the Universitie
Of *Lovaine*, when God fortun'd me by grace to see

Greater secrets and much more perfite,
Which onely to you I will disclosed to be,
That is the great Elixer both red and white.

5. For like it you to trust that truly I have found,
The perfect way of most secret Alchymie,
Which I will never truly for marke nor for pound
Make common but to you, and that conditionally,
That to youre selfe you shall keepe it full secretly,
And only to use it as may be to Gods pleasure,
Else in time comming to God I should abyey,
For my discovering of his secret treasure.

6. Therefore be you well advised and with good deliberation,
For of this secret shall know no other creature,
But onely you as I make faithfull protestation,
For all the time that herein life I shall endure,
Whereto I will your Lordship me ensure,
To my desire in this my oath for to agree,
Least I to me the wrath of God procure,
For such revealing of his great gift and privitie.

7. If God fortune you by me to win this treasure,
Serve him devowtly with more lawde and thanking,
Praying his Godhead in life that you may so endure,
His gifts of grace, and fortune to use to his pleasing,
Most especially intending over all thing,
To your power and cunning his precepts ten
So to observe, that into no danger your selfe you bring,
But that you in glory may see him hereafter, Amen.

8. And yet moreover I will your Lordship to pardon me,
For openly with pen I will it never it write,
But whensoever you list by practise you shall see,
By mouth also this precious secret, most of delight,
How may be made perfect Elixers both red and white,

Plaine unto your Lordship it shall declared be,
And if it please you, with easie expences and respite,
I will them worke by grace of the Trinitie.

9. But notwithstanding for perill that may befall,
If I dare not here plainely the knotte unbinde,
Yet in my writing I will not be so misticall,
But that by studie the true knowledge you may finde,
How that each thing is multiplied in his kinde,
And how the likenes of bodies metaline be transmutable
I will declare, that if you feele me in your minde,
My writing you shall finde true and no fained fable.

10. As Philosophers in the metheors doe write,
The likenes of bodies metaline be not transmutable,
But after he added these wordes of more delight,
Without they be reduced to their beginning materiable,
Wherefore such bodies within nature be liquiable,
Minerall and metaline may be mercurizate,
Conceive you may this science is not opinionable,
But very true, by Raymond and others determinate.

11. In the saide booke the Philosophers speake also,
Therein if it please your Highnes for to reade,
Of divers sulphures, and especially of two,
And of two mercuries joyned to them indeed,
Whereby he doth true understanders leade,
To the knowledge of the principle which is onely trew,
Both red, moist, pure, and white, as I have espied,
Which be neverthelesse found but of verie few.

12. And these two things be best, he addeth anone
For him that worketh the Alchymie to take:
Our golde and our silver therewith to make all one,
Wherefore I say who will our pearle and Ruby make,
The said principles looke he not forsake:

For at the beginning, if his principles be true,
And if so be by craft he can them also bake,
In th'end truly his worke he shall not rue.

13. But one great secret right needfull to be knowne,
That though the Philosophers speake plurally,
All is but one thing you may me well trowe,
In kinde which is our base principally,
Whereof doth spring both white and red naturally,
And yet the white must come first out of the red,
Which thing is not wrought manually,
But naturally, craft helping out of our lead.

14. For all the partes of our most precious stone,
As I can prove, be coessentiall and concrete,
Moreover there is no true principle but one,
Full long it was ere I therewith could meete,
Who can reduce him and knoweth his heate,
And onely kinde with kinde can well redresse,
Till filthie originall be clesed from his seate,
He likely is to finde our secrets more and lesse.

15. Therefore worke kinde onely with his owne kinde,
And so your Elements joyne that they not strive.
This poynt also for any beare in minde,
That passive natures you turne into active,
Of water, fire, and winde of earth make blive,
And of the quadrangle make a figure round,
Then have thou the honie of our bee-hive,
One ounce well worth one thousand pound.

16. The principall secret of secrets all,
Is true proportion which may not be behinde,
Wherein I counsell thee be not superficiall,
The true conclusion if you thinke to finde,
Turne earth into water and water into winde,

Therefore make fire and beware of the flood
Of *Noah*, wherein many men are so blinde,
That by this science they get little good.

17. I counsell you eate and drink temperately,
And beware well that *Iposarcha* come not in place.
Neshe not your wombe by drinking immoderately,
Least you quench naturall heate in little space,
The colour will tell appearing in your face,
Drinke no more therefore than you may eate,
Walke up and downe after an easie pace,
Chafe not your bodie too sore to sweate.

18. With easie fire after moving when you sweate,
Warme your bodie and make it drie againe,
By rivers and fountaines walke after meate,
At morning time visit the high mountaine,
That *Phisick* so biddeth I read certaine,
So high the mountaines yet doe you not ascend,
But that you may downwarde your way have plaine,
And with your mantle from colde ye you defend.

19. Such labour is wholesome your sweat for to drie
With napkin, and after it see you take no colde,
For grosse humors be purged by sweate kindly,
Use *Diacameron* then confect with perfect golde,
Hermidocles for watry humors good I holde,
Use *Ipericon perforat* with milke of tithimall*,
And *sperma Cæti* with red wine, and when you wax olde,
And Goats milke sod with wine nourisheth moysture radical.

20. But a good *Phisition* who so intendeth to be,
Our lower *Astronomie* needeth well to know,
And after that to learne well urine in a glasse to see,
And if it neede to be chafed the fire for to blow,
Then wittily it by divers wayes for to throw

After the cause to make a medicine blive,
Truly telling the infirmities all on a row,
Who this can doe by his Phisick is like to thrive.

21. We have our heaven incorruptible of the quintessence,
Ornate with signes, Elements, and starres bright,
Which moysteth our earth by subtill influence,
And of it a secret sulphure hid from sight,
It fetcheth by vertue of his active might,
Like as the Bee fetcheth honey out of the flower,
Which thing could doe no other worldly wight.
Therefore to God be all glory and honour.

22. And like as yce to water doth relent,
Where it was congealed by violence of colde,
When Phœbus yet* shineth with his heate influent,
Even so to water minerall reduced is our golde,
As witnesseth plainely, *Albert, Raymond, and Arnold*,
By heate and moysture and by craft occasionate,
Which congelation of the spirits, loe now I have tolde,
How our materialls together must be proportionate.

23. At the dyers craft you may learne this science,
Beholding with water how decoction they make
Upon the wad or madder easily and with patience,
Till tinctures doe appeare which then the cloth doth take,
Therein so fixed that they will never forsake
The cloth, for washing after they joyned be,
Even so our tinctures with the water of our lake,
We draw by boyling with the ashes of *Hermes* tree.

24. Which tinctures when they by craft are made perfite,
So dyeth mettles with colours aye permanent,
After the qualitie of the medicine, red or white,
That never away with anie fire wilbe brent:
To this example if you take good tent,

Unto your purpose the rather you shall winne.
And let your fire be easie, and not too fervent,
Where nature did leave what time you did beginne.

25. First calcine, and after that putrifie,
Dissolve, distill, sublime, discend, and fixe,
With Aqua vitæ oft times both wash and drie,
And make a marriage the bodie and spirite betwixt,
Which thus together naturallie if you can mixe,
In loosing of the bodie the water congeald shalbe,
Then shall the bodie die utterlie of the flixe,
Bleeding and changing his colours, as you shall see.

26. The third day againe to life he shall arise,
And devoure birds, and beasts of the wilderness,
Crowes, popingaies, pies, peacocks, and mavois,
The Phoenix, with the Eagle, and the Griffin of fearfulnessse,
The greene Lion, with the red Dragon he shall distresse,
With the white Dragon, and the Antelop, Unicorne & Panther,
With other beasts and birds both more and lesse,
The Basiliske also, which almost each one doth feare.

27. In *bus* and *nibus* he shall arise and descend,
Up to the Moone, and sith up to the Sunne,
Through the Ocean sea, which round is withouten end,
Onely shippen within a little glassen tunne;
When he is there come, then is the mastrie wonne:
About which journey, great goods you shall not spend,
And yet you shall be glad that ever it was begunne,
Patiently if you list to your worke attend.

28. For then both bodie and spirite with oyle and water,
Soule, and tincture, one thing both white and red,
After colours variable it containeth, whatsover men clatter;
Which also is called after he hath once been dead
And is revived, our Markaside, our Magnet, and our lead,

Our Sulphur, our Arsinike, and our true Calx vive,
Our Sunne, our Moone, our ferment and our bread,
Our toad, our Basiliske, our unknowen bodie, our man, our wife.

29. Our bodie thus naturally by craft when he is renovate
Of the first order, is medicine called in our Philosophie;
Which oftentimes againe must be spiritualizate*,
The round wheele turning of our Astronomie,
And so to the Elixer of spirits you must come: for why
Till the sonne of the fixed by the sonne of the fixer be
overgone,
Elixer of bodies, named it is onely,
And this found secret poynt, deceaveth manie one.

30. This naturall process by helpe of craft thus consummate,
Dissolveth Elixer spirituall in our unctuous humiditie,
Then in Balneo Mare together let them be circulate,
Like new honie or oyle, till perfectly they be thickned.
Then will that medicine heale all infirmitie,
And turne all mettals to Sunne and Moone perfectly,
Thus you shall make the great Elixer, and Aurum potabile,
By the grace and will of God, to whom be all honour and glorie.

Amen. quod George Ripley.

FINIS.

George Ripleys Whele mentioned in his Worke.

In the same he hath his tabernacle,

Success and more blessed life.

The first round is called the circle of

Calum.

Calumination into darkness, and Lona

into light.



[The brought out of the Sunne.]
[Cyle out of the most harden.]

[The Sunne is in the right, and the
Meeke shall not stand in right.]

Our heaven this figure called is,
our table with of the house of assembly,
Where the world is made out of us,
to make our medicine perfect,
call the more light into the dark,
And with the light, and the light,
In grace, and for the worlds pray.

"George Ripleys Whele." *Compound of Alchymy* (1591). Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California

To the indifferent Reader.

Forasmuch, (Gentle reader) as nothing can be performed, with what singularity of judgement, exquisite foresight, great care and diligence soever, in any action of importance, but that some fault or error must of necessitie be committed, it being an unseperable propertie of nature accident unto men to erre; for that it is impossible for the most curious, quickest, and piercing eye to see all things: I hope therefore thou wilt not finde it strange, if any thing have bin mistaken by me in deciphering of this worke, by conference of many olde rude and ill written Copies, out of which the same with great travel and industry hath been gathered, as the Rose from among the Briers and Thornes, or the sweete Violet out of the Nettles: for that every man carried with a severall opinion and sense, thinketh best of his judgement, Copie and correction: whereupon it was not possible for me to ground any certaintie if I had not happened on a most auncient recorde thereof, and used the assistance of a most notable and experienced decipherer of olde and unperfect writing, and after conferred with many skilfull persons in this high Arte: praying thee if in reading hereof thou shalt note any fault in matter or forme, that thou wilt curteously note the same and send it unto me, or the house of *Peter Bales* in the Olde Bayly, to bee corrected upon the next generall impression, there being but a small number of these Bookes imprinted, remayning at this time in his handes to be privately delivered to the learned & desirous thereof. *Vale.*

Textual Notes

- 5 Philosophie]; Phlosophie 1591.
21 deity,]; deity,t G2, G3.
21 glorification]; glorificaion 1591 except BL and G1.
21 forasmuch]; forasumch 1591 except G1.
29 Calxes]; Calx 1591; Calxes *TCB*.
31 burning the principle]; burning principle 1591; brennying the pryncyple *TCB*.
32 contraries]; contractions 1591; contraryose *TCB*.
32 black]; blacknes 1591; Blacke *TCB*.
32 the]; th F.
35 philosophie]; philosohie 1591.
42 together]; togethers 1591.
45 principles there be]; principles be 1591; principles there be Sloane MS 3580.
50 metals]; metttalls 1591.
54 courage]; comage 1591; corage *TCB*.
54 without damage]; with domage 1591; wythout damage *TCB*.
58 thee]; he 1591; thee *TCB*.
63 blin]; linne 1591; blyn *TCB*.
67 sublime not to]; sublime to 1591; sublime not to *TCB* and all Sloane manuscripts consulted except 2174.
70 amalgams]; malgames 1591.
74 That]; that 1591.
74 Till]; till 1591.
75 other]; orher 1591.
75 fier then aire]; Ayre then fire 1591; fier then aire *TCB* and all

Sloane MSS except 2198.

76 quality]; gueneritie 1591; quality Sloane 3580.

86 an amalgam]; a Malgame 1591.

87 Out of his myne]; One of his myner 1591; HEH hand-corrects to Out; Out of his myne Ferguson MS 58 and all Sloane MSS consulted.

89 maintainer]; maintaine, F.

93 tithimall]; tincturiall 1591; tithimall *TCB*.

94 yet]; it HEH, G1, G2.

96 spiritualizate]; propertualicate 1591; spiritualizate *TCB*.

Commentary on

Preliminary Material

¹ On this dedication, see also the Introduction.

² Burdensome, expensive (*OED*).

³ "the most incredible" to be "the most true."

⁴ Rabbards appears to be drawing this idea from Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, which contains several passages that are similar although not identical. See, for example, *The Woorke of the excellent Philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca concerning Benefyting* . . . Translated out of Latin by Arthur Golding (London, 1578), bks 2.24, 3.5, 4.2, 6.2.

⁵ Thomas Newton (1542?–1607), poet, physician, and divine, was a native of Cheshire and ordinarily signs himself in this manner. He was the author of several books and translations on historical, religious, and medical topics and widely known for his commendatory verses in Latin and English (*DNB*). The following English translation is by Professor Winfried Schleiner: "Thomas Newton of Chester" / "Searching out the secret treasures of the art of alchemy / George Ripley left behind wonderful monuments / of his rare genius, which no old age / will devour or be able to bury with foul decay. / Noone may handle such great mysteries with unclean hands, / let alone worship Hermetic gold-making. / Plato calls that a bond, Ovid a golden fleece, / and golden apples guarded by a watchful dragon. / It is much praised by [Pico della] Mirandula, Lullus, / Geber, Avicenna, Hippocrates, Morienus, Aquinas, / Duns Scotus, Arnaldus, Vin-

centius, Oldradus, Hermes, / Plinius, Albertus, Ficinus, Cuba, Valescus, / Eustathius, Suidas, Maro, Zosimus, Haly [Abbas], Bacon, / Rhasis, Aristoteles, Rosinus, even Petrus Aponensis, / and many others. All pay their dues to it as gracious beloved wisdom / and are copious with their words and affections.”

⁶ Although not included in J. Roberts’ and A.W. Watson’s *John Dee’s Library Catalogue* or in the catalogue of Dee writings in N.H. Clulee’s *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy*, Dee is often regarded as the author of this poem. See, for example, Michael Wilding, “Edward Kelly: A Life,” *Cauda Pavonis: Studies in Hermeticism* 18,1–2 (1999), 20–21. I have not been able to identify “Zoile” (1.5).

⁷ On the life of Peter Bales (1547–1610), the Elizabethan handwriting specialist, and his links with Raph Rabbards, see the Introduction and the *DNB* entry.

⁸ A Latin copy of these lines by Marcellus Palingenius (probably Pier Angelo Manzolli of Stellata), author of the *Zodiacus Vitae* (Venice, ca. 1535), is included in British Library Sloane MS 319, ff.35–35^v, which also contains works by Ripley: the Prologue to the “Marrow of Alchimie” (ff.10–18), the “Concordance bitwene Raymond & Guydo” (ff.19–20), “George Ripleyes Wheele” (ff.21^v–22), and “A Compendium of S^r Geo. Ripley’s Alchimy” (f.22^v). Sloane 319 dates from about 1600 and may have provided Raph Rabbards with the idea of invoking Palingenius in his Ripley edition or, conversely, the manuscript link may be a reflection of the 1591 pairing. The Neo-Latin poet was, in any case, extremely popular in sixteenth-century England. Below is Barnabie Googe’s English translation of these lines from the tenth book, “Capricornus,” of *The Zodiake of life, written by the excellent and Christian Poet, Marcellus Palingenius Stellatus* (London, 1576), p. 187:

Take here this young Arcadian bloud, and swift untrusty swayne,
And plunged deepe in Stygian streames, let him forthwith be
slaine:

In bosome thrust of Hyales him let the Gods receave,

Whome Lemnian countrey worshipping, and hye aloft him heave:
Then bury him in warmed wombe, and corrupt him undoe,
Whose dropping joyntes, a sprite shall pearce that falles our
bodies fro,

And wonderously shall call again, decesde and quenched quite
Him from the darke new clad in cloke of Golde, and shining
bright

With Silver shew, then him againe amide the fier cast:

An other straight shall spring thereof, as Phoenix chaunging
fast,

And perfect leave the bodies all that it shall feele or touche,
The bondes and lawes of nature here, surmounting aye by muche,
Shall chaunge the kindes and drive away, this needy poverty.

⁹ The text of the poem appears in this form in Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, 332–33, and in *The Alchemical Writings of Edward Kelly*, translated from the Hamburg edition of 1676, by A.E. Waite (London: James Elliott, 1893). If, as is generally supposed, Kelly is the author of this poem and it was written shortly before 1591, one sees that Rabbards has printed this testimonial to Ripley at the time when Kelly's notoriety was at its height. His supposed possession of the philosopher's stone (see the entry for 19 December 1586 in *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell [London: Camden Society, 1842], 22) had by this time attracted the attention of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague and, now separated from Dee, Kelly proceeded to dazzle the Bohemian court with his alchemical experiments. At the same time, Queen Elizabeth and Lord Burghley were exerting pressure on Kelly, largely through Edward Dyer (also known for his alchemical interests), to return to England to practice alchemy on behalf of his country. Dyer's efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, and Kelly died attempting to escape Rudolph's prison in 1595, or possibly as late as 1597. See Michael Wilding, "Edward Kelly: A Life," in *Cauda Pavonis: Studies in Hermeticism*; R.J.W. Evans, *Rudolf II and his World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); Ralph M. Sargent, *At the Court of Queen Elizabeth: The Life and Lyrics of Sir Edward Dyer* (London and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1935), chap.

7, esp. 107–14.

¹⁰ For Kelly, and for Ripley in his fuller discussion in st. 2 “Of Dissolution,” Adrop (“Adropp” or “Magnesia”) refers either to the proximate matter from which the philosopher’s stone is made or the stone itself. William Salmon’s gloss on “Leprous Gold” in his trans. of *The Marrow of Alchymie* states: “*This Leprous Gold the Philosophers call, Adrop, or Adrup, which Gold is the Philosophers Lead. This Alchymick Body . . . he calls Venus in the lesser Work, both for Gold and Silver, because it is a Neutral Body, and very easie to be changed to either*” (650). For Ripley in the same work, “Leprous Gold” is an “Alchymick Body” wherein “Gold and Silver, are in Essence and Power, but not in sight or appearance,” until the body is purified (650).

¹¹ Appealing to a divine prototype, this description of the famous alchemical fifth essence or quintessence, identified with the philosopher’s stone, emphasizes its universality and capacity to harmonize the four opposing elements alluded to in st. 1. The idea of unity in multiplicity present in “Conteining all, and yet himselfe a maid,” also recalls the symbolism of st. 30 of Ripley’s *Cantaleña*: “Four Elements, Brave Arms, and Polish’d well / God gave him, in the midst whereof did dwell / The Crowned Maid, ordained for to be / In the Fifth Circle of the Myserie” (qtd. in Lyndy Abraham, *A Dictionary of Alchemical Imagery* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998], 76).

¹² 1591 prints the text of the poem in italics. The best interpretive guide to this poem is provided in Eirenaeus Philalethes, *Ripley Reviv’d: or, An Exposition upon Sir George Ripley’s Hermetico-Poetical Works* (London, 1678), which sees it as encapsulating the secret of the entire opus.

¹³ In Philalethes’ gloss, the toad initially represents the materials of the stone at the putrefaction stage: “Here we have a Toad described, and in it the whole secret of Philosophers: The Toad is Gold; so called, because it is an Earthly Body, but most especially for the black stinking venenosity which this operation comes to in the first days of its preparation, before the whiteness

appear; during the rule of *Saturn*, therefore it is called the ruddy Toad" (*Vision* in *RR* 2).

¹⁴ Philalethes notes that the philosophers sometimes call this "*Aqua Ardens* [burning water], sometimes *Acetum Acerrimum*, but most commonly they call it their *Mercury*" (*Vision* in *RR* 3). The drinking of the grape juice represents the absorption of the mercurial waters by the body of the stone, causing its form to be reduced and altered.

¹⁵ "At length the Body burst[s] asunder and [is] reduced into a Powder, like to the Atoms of the Sun, black of the blackest and of a viscous matter" (*Vision* in *RR* 8).

¹⁶ Philalethes glosses this line as Ripley's allegory "of volatization which is an ascension, and descension, or circulation of the confections within the Glass. Which Glass here called the secret Den, is else-where called by the same Author, a little Glassentun, and is an ovall Vessel; of the purest White Glass, about the bigness of an ordinary Hen-Egg" (*Vision* in *RR* 11).

¹⁷ Philalethes states, "These colours of the *Mercury*, do affect the subsident fixed Body, with sutable colours and the Bodies from these exhalations, be Tincted with a ruddy colour" (*Vision* in *RR* 14).

¹⁸ Philalethes applies the allegory to the operation within the vessel: "And then the Corps begin to lack breath; that is, the Fumes begin to cease: for with oft ascending and descending the Spirits are somewhat fixed, and turned into Powder or Dust, and are now in the bottom of the Vessel, drawing fast to Putrefaction: Nor do they for a time ascend, but remain below" (*Vision* in *RR* 16).

¹⁹ Philalethes details the sequence of colors: following the attaining of "intire Blackness, . . . after six and fifty days more, or sixty, expect the Peacocks Tayl, and Colours of the Rainbow; and after two and twenty days more, or four and twenty, expect *Luna* perfect, the Whitest White" (23); eventually, "in a moment comes the Tyrian Colour, the sparkling Red, the fiery

Vermilion, and Red Poppy of the Rock" (*Vision in RR 23*).

²⁰ The use of italics is reversed in 1591. On the authorship of this poem, the Rev. Marmaduke Prickett, *An Historical and Architectural Description of the Priory Church of Bridlington* (Cambridge: for T. Stevenson, 1831), 92, states: "Then follow these lines [i.e., the *Titulus operis*] both in the Oxford and Cambridge [manuscript] copies; the author of which appears, from the latter, to have been the transcriber: Thomas Knyvet, A.D. 1585. A^o. aetatis 18."

On Ripley's travels and study in Italy see my Introduction. Manuscript versions of the *Compound* at times do not preserve the independence of this verse. For example, Sloane MS 2198, ff.3-32, entitled "The XII Gates of S^r George Ripley," presents these lines as two numbered stanzas and then proceeds to the Prologue ("Childe of this discipline") without a break.

²¹ Possibly Exning, north of Newmarket in W. Suffolk. It appears on the map of Cambridgeshire in William Camden's *Britain, or A Chorographical Description*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1610), 461. If this is an English place-name, I do not know how it fits into Ripley's biography. Oxford's Corpus Christi Col. MS 172 has a marginal annotation in a second hand opposite this line (f.12^v), saying "Ixninge in Italy."

²² *A briefe note to the Readers*. A photographic reproduction of the 1591 "Wheele" appears in the same relative position in this edition.

Commentary on

The Compound of Alchymy

Notes are referenced by Section or Gate number and Stanza.

The Prologue. The moral imperatives here set forth, both Classical and Christian in provenance, were traditionally regarded as necessary to alchemical success. The injunction to secrecy in the final stanza is also conventional.

Prol. 7 *Thinke how Adam.* In this stanza, Ripley glances quickly at the losses and punishments of the most famous Old Testament heroes: Adam's fall (Gen. 3); Sampson's betrayal by Delilah (Judges 16); Saul's defeat by the Philistines and death by self-inflicted wound (1 Samuel 31); David's punishment for his adultery with Bathesheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11-12); Absalom's death by hanging and stabbing (2 Sam. 18); Hezekiah's sickness (2 Kings 20).

Prol. 8 *Enoch and Hely.* Ripley refers to the translation to heaven of Enoch (Heb. 11:5) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11).

Prol. 9 *Daniel.* Ripley alludes to Daniel's adventures in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon (Dan. 1-6).

Prol. 10 *Dathan and Abiron* [Abiram]. The sons of Eliab who conspired against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and were swallowed by the earth as punishment (Numbers 16).

The Preface. This long Preface—twenty-nine stanzas in 1591—is sometimes divided following the opening five stanzas, which

in Sloane MS 2198 are titled "A Prayer, to almighty God." Sloane MS 2174 omits the first seven stanzas of the full preface and begins with st. 8. In printed editions, the *Opuscula quaedam chemica* (Frankfurt, 1614) places this "Oratio Auctoris ad Deum" at the close of the *Medulla* (42–43), and in *Medicina Practica: or, Practical Physick*, William Salmon also prints the translated "prayer" stanzas as part of *The Marrow of Alchymy* (London, 1692), 686–87. Early commentators on the *Compound* have sometimes seen this *Preface*, not only as introductory in nature, but as providing a sufficiently detailed summary to render at least parts of the poem redundant.

Pref. 1 obtundeth. To deprive the senses of sharpness and vigor (*OED*).

Pref. 2 displicable. Displeasing, the only recorded use in the *OED*.

Pref. 5 Chanon Regular of *Bridlington*. Ripley now identifies himself, as had been done by the author of the *Titulus Operis*. Canons regular were bound by vow to a strict, communal religious life (Hey 392), preaching in local parishes and engaging in manual labour (66). Nonetheless, as J.C. Dickinson notes, "regular canons were ranked, in theory at least, not with monks, but with the secular clergy" (201). The Augustinian priory at Bridlington was large and prosperous (Hey 30). On the history of the church, which was both parochial and conventual before the dissolution, see Marmaduke Prickett, *An Historical and Architectural Description of the Priory Church of Bridlington*.

Pref. 6 In the beginning. Following alchemical tradition, Ripley will liken preparation of the philosopher's stone (starting at st. 8) to divine creation from the original chaos, "one mas / Confused."

Pref. 8 Magnesa also of sulphure and Mercurie. In this context, Magnesa (var. of Magnesia) is another name for the philosopher's stone, combining in perfect proportion its proximate materials, sulphur and mercury (cf. "Adrop"). The philosopher's stone is a microcosm of God's creation and, like it, is ultimately derived

from one underlying substance or *prima materia*.

Pref. 11 *Mercurie*. For Ripley, as for many alchemists, the prime ingredient of the philosopher's stone is the specially prepared "philosophical" (or "sophic") mercury, not the common metal. The complexity of this key alchemical figure is at least hinted at in Ripley's ensuing discussion of the "*Mercuries three*." See also Eirenaeus Philalethes' *An Exposition upon the Preface of Sir George Ripley*," in *RR* 38.

Pref. 13 *Raymond* his menstrues. Alchemically, "menstrues" or "menstruums" were liquid solvents used in dissolving solids. For Ripley, they were identified with the aforementioned "*Mercuries three*" and part of the Lullian (or pseudo-Lullian) vocabulary that Ripley frequently adopts. Menstrues of the third, "essential" sort were critical both to making the philosopher's stone and increasing its potency through the reiterated process of "solve and coagula" (dissolving and coagulation); Lull, Ripley's most frequently cited source, was believed to have said: "in every Dissolution and Congealation, you do augment your Medicine and Degree," *Philosophical and Chymical Experiments of the Famous Philosopher Raymund Lully* (London 1657), 109.

Pref. 15 sayth *Avicen*. The Arabian philosopher, physician, and scholar, Avicenna (980–1037); as the chief conduit through which knowledge of Hippocrates, Galen, and Aristotle was transmitted, he and his *Canon of Medicine* were extraordinarily influential on the course of medieval and Renaissance medicine throughout Europe. As with Lull, many works on alchemy were falsely attributed to him; however, in the "Section on the Formation of Minerals," from the *Congelatione et Conglutinatione Lapidum*, Avicenna asserts that alchemy cannot produce "any true change of species" in metals, only "excellent imitations, dyeing the red metal white so that it closely resembles silver, or dyeing it yellow so that it closely resembles gold," *Avicennae De Congelatione et Conglutinatione Lapidum, Being Sections of the Kitab Al-Shifa*, Latin and Arabic texts, with an English translation, ed. E.J. Holmyard and D.C. Mandeville (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1927), 41. The ideas that Ripley attributes to Avicenna in this stanza

may be derived from this popular treatise, see pp. 38–40.

Pref. 16 Lyon greene. Philalethes calls this extremely popular and elusive image “the Instrument moving the *Gold* to putrifie; and in regard that it doth naturally incline the Body to putrifie . . . it is called by some Philosophers *Aqua foetida*, . . . yet indeed it is not in its own nature unclean, but made pure, as pure as the Art of the Artist can make it with the help of Nature. . . . This hidden Body, or rather Chaos, the Philosophers have highly extolled and deeply concealed, but they usually call it their *Green Lyon*,” (*Preface*, RR 47–8). For Ripley, the Green Lion does not mean vitriol (see Gate 6, st. 24), but the crude, “unripe” ore from which the mercurial spirit can be extracted.

Pref. 17 the second which is an humiditie. The second of the three menstruums or waters, is associated with vernal renewal; for Philalethes, it draws forth “the Tincture out of our dissolved Bodies; which doth cause our dead Body to rise, and to spring forth in Sprigs and Branches, like to the tender Grass in the Spring” (*Preface*, RR 55).

Pref. 18 the third humiditie. This is the last and purest of the waters, described largely through oxymoron and paradox. For Philalethes it is “our true Incombustible Mercury, . . . totally purged from all its burning faeculency” (*Preface*, RR 61).

Pref. 18 *Hermes* tree. Also “philosophical” tree. Here and elsewhere in the *Compound*, trees serve as symbols for the alchemical process and the growth of the philosopher’s stone within the alembic; they symbolize a fruitful *coniunctio* of male and female, sun and moon, sulphur and mercury as well as the potency of the philosophical waters in which these trees are planted (cf. Gate 3, st. 8). Philalethes comments that “our Tree is at his periods of [several] colours, and in this form, which Tree by the heat of the Fire is dried to a Calx, which is called the Ashes of Hermes Tree” (*Preface*, RR 66.)

Pref. 20 labour exuberate. To render fruitful (*OED*, cited as the first recorded use).

Pref. 22 Calcination. See “*Of Calcination. The First Gate.*”

Pref. 22 subtilation. To rarify or make thin (*OED*).

Pref. 23 *Aurum potabile*. The famous medicinal or drinkable gold; another name for the philosopher's stone or, in this context, the elixir of life which supposedly revived the aged Raymond Lull.

Pref. 24 Our *Bazeliske* or our *Cockatrice*. Alternate names for the philosopher's stone or elixir; the links between its fabled death glance and alchemical efficacy are explained in st. 25.

I.1 *Calcination* is the purgation. Ripley begins his account of the first stage of the twelve-stage process with definitions and instructions for proceeding correctly. Calcination, the reduction of a metal to an ashy calx through heat for the purpose of purification, must be achieved without loss of its "radicall humiditie" (which would destroy the body) and only through use of appropriate materials.

I.2 Corosives. That which consumes by chemical action, e.g., acids (*OED*).

I.2 water ardent. Inflammable, combustible (earliest recorded use, *OED*).

I.4 Worke wittely only kind with kind. The *Marrow of Alchymie* (Salmon edn.) states: "Joyn like with like, and kind with kind, as you ought; every seed answers and rejoyces in seed of its own kind: and every Spirit is fixed with a Calx of its own kind or Nature" (688).

I.6 Of three degrees. Philalethes notes: "These Calxes are the periods of so many Circulations, and have so many degrees allowed to each of them; our first Circulation confounds the Elements, our second renews the Air, and the third exalts the Fire, and then is our Stone perfect" (*Exposition*, RR 138).

I.7 proportion. For alchemists, the matter of the *proportion* of the ingredients of the stone was as important as the ingredients themselves and the duration of the process. Ripley's instructions on the balance of Sol and Luna in sts. 7–10 are especially cryptic.

I.7 One of the Sunne, two of the Moone. Philalethes glosses these lines: "Take thy Body which without any equivocation is most pure Gold, let it be exquisitely purged, then filed or laminated, or calcined with *Mercury*; . . . of this take one part, and of our Water (which is without equivocation Argent- vive animated, which then we call our *Luna*) two parts, mix them together in an *Amalgama*, and grind them in a Mortar of Glass, or on a Marble, till they become very soft, and all the grettness of the Body be subtilized with the *Mercury*, that they may seem to be one pap or paste, which we call Inceration" (*Exposition*, RR 141-2).

I.8 *Mercurie* foure to the Sun. Philalethes warns of increasing complexities as he develops the idea of Internal and External proportion: "Now pluck up your attention, for my speech will be difficult. When your Body to your *Mercury* in outward proportion is one to two, then must your *Mercury* in its inward proportion be just opposite, that is, four to two, else you shall never make Harmony that is good Musick" (*Exposition*, RR 142).

I.8 In figure of the Trinitee. Ripley speaks to this point more simply in the *Marrow of Alchymie* (Salmon edn.): "Make a Trinity of Unity, without dissention; this is the most certain and best proportion: and by how much the lesser part is the more spiritual, by so much the more easily will the dissolution be performed: drown not the Earth with too much water, lest you destroy the whole Work" (689); cf. Philalethes, *Exposition*, RR 144-45.

I.9 *Bacon*. Roger Bacon (c.1214-c.1294), philosopher, theologian, and scientist, was also regarded in the sixteenth century as an alchemist and magus. The first English edition of the popular *Mirror of Alchemy*, falsely attributed to him, appeared in 1597, and Robert Greene's comedy, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c.1591) helped perpetuate the popular image of Bacon's occult interests and powers.

I.11 water swall. A large swell or outpouring of water (*OED*). Philalethes prints "Water small," which is inconsistent with the following line (*Exposition*, RR 148). In "Of Cibation," st. 2,

Ripley again warns of "Noahs flood."

I.11 neshe. To make soft and tender (*OED*).

I.13 Foure Natures into the fift. See earlier note on "*Essence* fift" and "*Sr. E.K. Concerning the Philosophers Stone*," ll. 29–30. Philalethes also presents the philosopher's stone or quintessence as the harmonization, through Calcination, of the four elements and their conflicting qualities (see *Exposition*, RR 158–9).

I.17 levigacion. The usual alchemical sense of "trituration or the rubbing down of a substance in a mortar" or "reducing to a fine powder" (for which the *OED* attributes earliest use to Ripley) seems inapplicable to water and air. "Levigate" is secondarily associated with "lightened" or "to lighten," a meaning that better suits the distillation process Ripley appears to describe.

I.17 wheele of Elements. Alchemists, and especially Ripley, never tire of urging the rotation of the elements, an idea at least as old as Plato's *Timaeus* (56 d, e) and based in the belief that since the four elements were different forms of one underlying *prima materia*, transformation of one to another was possible through the manipulation of their constituent qualities. This is the principal theoretical ground for alchemical transmutation and the basis of the *Compound's* "Wheele" diagram and several other references.

I.18 contraries. The context and *TCB's* "contraryose" support "contraries" rather than 1591's "contractions."

I.20 heade of the Crowe. These terms, all associated with blackness, represent the putrefaction or nigredo stage of the alchemical process. Abraham notes: "The old body of the metal or matter for the Stone is dissolved and putrefied into the first matter of creation, the *prima materia*, so that it may be regenerated and cast into a new form" (*DAI* 49).

I.20 *Hermes* Tree. See earlier note on *Preface*, st. 18. Sir Isaac Newton observes: "I know whereof I write, for I have in the fire manifold glasses with gold and this mercury. They grow in these glasses in the form of a tree, and by a continued circulation the

trees are dissolved again with the work into new mercury. . . . For it makes gold begin to swell, to be swollen, and to putrefy, and also to spring forth into sprouts and branches, changing colors daily, the appearances of which fascinate me everyday" (Keynes MS 18 f.1^r, qtd. in Betty Jo Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy or The Huntying of the Greene Lyon* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975], 178.)

I.20 *Toade* of the earth. See note on *Vision*.

II.1 *Dissolution*. As Ripley notes, the aim of this stage is to reduce material from a solid state to a liquid, making "intenuate things that were thick also," through the use of a solvent ("our first menstroe"). The alchemists constantly paired Dissolution with Coagulation ("solve et coagula"), which aimed to convert liquids into solids; see st. 4.

II.1 of light. In the *TCB* text of the *Compound*, Ashmole plausibly emends "to syght."

II.2 Father is the Sunne. Ripley's description of the philosopher's stone utilizes images from the *Smaragdine Table of Hermes Trismegistus*: "His father is the sun, his mother is the moone, the wind bore it in hir belly" (in *The Mirror of Alchimy*, 16).

II.2 our Magnesia, our Adropp. Whereas in Edward Kelly's dedicatory poem, "Adrop" referred primarily to a proximate ingredient of the stone, here Ripley equates it with "Magnesia" or the stone itself, the product of the conjunction of opposites, sister and brother, mercury and sulphur. *The Marrow of Alchymie* (Salmon ed.) supports this reading: "Of this Impure Body . . . is made the great Elixir of the Red and White, whose Name is *Adrop*, or *Adrup*, viz. the Philosophers *Lead*" (651).

II.4 solution is cause of our *Congelation*. Philalethes notes: "When once thou hast the true mastery of our Dissolution, thou needest take no care for Congelation, for governing it on with thy Fire, thou shalt attain Coagulation without any laying on of hands" (*Exposition*, RR 197).

II.5 water which wetteth no hand. This is the mineral water or prima materia, reduction of a solid to which is the aim of Dissolution (cf. st.7). Philalethes explains the enigma as follows: "So we in our Work dissolve our Body, which is Gold, in its own Water, in which it is softned as a Seed in its proper ground, and being softned it relents into Water, not diaphanous, such as is the Waters of the Clouds, or of Fountains, but Mineral, even *Mercury* which wetteth no hand, nor cleaves to any thing but that which is of its own substance and essence" (*Exposition*, RR 198–99).

II.11 Altitude, Latitude, and also profunditie. For Ripley, rotation of the philosophical wheel ("Untill diversitie be brought to perfect unities," st. 8) is here explained in terms of the points of the compass, colors, seasons, and height, width, and "profunditie" or depth (the earliest recorded use of "profundity" in this sense in the *OED*). This topic is elaborated in the diagram of the "Whee" printed at the end of this edition. See also RR 208–11, British Library Sloane MS 319, and Corpus Christi Col. MS 172, where, as here, the process begins in the West, proceeds to the North and East, and concludes in the South.

II.14 in one glasse. The egg- or womb-shaped vessel is proverbial in alchemical writing.

II.14 Let never thy glasse. Alchemical authorities typically recommend the use of moderate heat for distillation. Philalethes states, "Let the neck [of the vessel] be considerably cooler then the other part, that thy Vapours may condense in it, which else will burst the Glass violently" (*Exposition*, RR 156).

III.1 *Seperation*. Philalethes cites Artephius's definition: "Separation the Key of the Work, . . . is a Sublimation in a continual Vapour, that what is Heavenly and subtile, may ascend aloft, that is, to the upper part of the Vessel, and there take the nature of a Body Heavenly, or Spirit; and what is gross may remain below, in the nature of a Body Earthly, which is the end of our Mastery" (*Exposition*, RR 224). The liquid is to be distilled seven times.

III.2 tetraptative. I.e., combining four things (*OED*), to form the quintessence.

III.3 Prophet in the Psalmodie. Ripley's alchemical analogy is based on David's praise of God for providing water from the rock in the wilderness (Psalms 78:15-16, 20; 105: 41).

III.3 hardest rock oyle abundantly. In Deut. 32:13, Moses' song of praise to God reads in part, "he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock."

III.8 *Hermes* moysten his tree. See notes, Pref. 18 and I.20 above.

III.9 venymous Tire. Or "tyre," an allegedly venomous snake of Syria (earliest record use, *OED*). Philalethes notes, "This Water is by Philosophers called their Venom, and indeed it is a very strong poison, to wit, to the Body of Sol, to which it is mixed" (*Exposition*, RR 242).

III.12 Rayse up the birds. An image of the volatile vapors rising in the distillatory (or philosopher's egg) and descending as water drops. See the illustration from Hieronymus Reussner's *Pandora* (Basel, 1582), reproduced in Alexander Roob, *The Hermetic Museum: Alchemy & Mysticism* (Koln: Taschen, 1997), 361.

III.14 seaven times sublimate. Multiple sublimations and distillations reflect Ripley's emphasis on the purification of the matter of the stone. Abraham cites Bassett Jones's definition of sublimation as "that wherby the flower or subtile partes of a body are Elevated unto the topp of the Vessell and there, by vertue of the Ayer, congeal'd" (*DAI* 55-6).

III.15 Foure fires there be. Ripley clarifies the different types in the *Marrow of Alchymie*: "XIX. There are four kinds of Fires which you ought to know; the Natural, the Innatural, that contrary to Nature, and the Elemental, which burns Wood: These are the fires we use, and no others. XX. The Fire of Nature is in every thing, and is the third Menstruum. The Innatural Fire is occasionally so called, and it is the Fire of Ashes, of Sand, and

Baths for putrefying: and without this no Putrefaction can be done. XXI. The Fire against Nature, is that which tears Bodies to pieces or Atoms; which is the fiery Dragon, violently burning like the fire of Hell" (*MP* 690–91).

III.16 balnes. From balneum, a warm bath (earliest record use in *OED*).

IV.1 examine. Tortured, the earliest recorded use in the *OED*. The "torturing" of metals by means of fire and corrosives is a common charge in alchemical writing.

IV.4 reincrudate. To make crude again (Ripley's use precedes earliest recorded in *OED*).

IV.4 colligate. To be bound together, fastened or attached; (earliest recorded use in *OED*).

IV.6 *Conjunction* three. This chapter is closely linked to the preceding, the two comprising the critical "solve et coagula" discussion. In the *Marrow* Ripley states, "Conjunction is the joyning together of things separated, and of differing Qualities; or the Adequation or bringing to an equality of principles" (*MP* 691). On Ripley's "second" or "true" type of conjunction, Philalethes notes that it is "so real that the Spirit and the Body pass one into another, penetrating each others dimensions, the Spirit being one with the body, and the Body being the Spirit, the Form swallowing up the Matter in unity, so that all becomes really Tincture" (*Exposition*, *RR* 277; on the progression of the three conjunctions, see 288–94).

IV.8 *Guido de Montano*. I.e., Guido de Montanor, a medieval alchemist to whom Ripley refers on several occasions and is in part the subject of his "The concordance bitwene Raymond [Lull] and Guydo," which appears in several manuscript versions, including Sloane MSS 319 and 1423. In the *Marrow* (Salmon ed.) there is mention of his experiments with the Spirit of Wine (678), and one of his works, the *Descriptio Philosophici Adrop*, is included in Zetzner's *Theatrum Chemicum* (1661), 6:543–68.

IV.9 woman hath veines fifteene. Philalethes states: "So is

there in the Generation of our Stone, much that may answer to the Generation of Man: for as Anatomists do allow the Woman fifteen veins conducing to the act of Venery and Procreation, and the Man from whom comes the Male Sperm but five; so our Stone in his first Composition requires three parts of the Water or Feminine Sperm, to one of *Sulphur* or the Male" (*Exposition*, RR 295). Analogies with human conception occur throughout this section, culminating in birth of the "philosophical child" in st. 12.

Owing to their traditional and often derivative nature, it is perhaps impossible to determine a precise source for Ripley's statement in early anatomical treatises. His contemporary, the Veronese physician Allesandro Benedetti (1450?-1512), states the following in his *Anatomice, or The History of the Human Body* (1497): In men, "Two seminal [spermatic] veins come from the kidneys to the heads of the testicles. . . . Two bloodless arteries [spermatic] stretch forth from the aorta vein, for in coitus spirit precedes the semen; by means of the spirit the semen is propelled in spurts. From the head of the testicles a duct [vas deferens] receives it, thicker than the previous one above and more sinewy" (chap. 17, "On the Seminal Veins"). Chap. 23, "On the Seminal Vessels of Women," reports, "These veins [ovarian], which many physicians declare to be prolific in humor, have almost the same origin in the female as I described above in men. . . . However, I acknowledge that from the kidneys, spine, coxae, and loins many veins and arteries which are scattered forth pass into very slender fibers through the vulva and from these the genital humor necessary for conception . . . is collected within" (L.R. Lind, *Studies in Pre-Vesalian Anatomy: Biography, Translations, Documents* [Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1975], 96, 98).

IV.10 seldome have strumpets children. Philalethes notes, "for as it is with Harlots, who lying with many men, conceive rarely of any: so if thou joyn crude *Mercury* after thy first Conjunction, I will not say that it is impossible, but very unlikely that ever thou shalt attain our Mastery" (*Exposition*, RR 298).

IV. 12 thy childe. I.e., the product of the conjunction of opposites: "a Neuter from both [parents], and yet partakes of both; and these two Natures that did seem so opposite, are now conspired together to make one substance incorruptible" (*Exposition*, RR 304). This offspring is identified with the white stone, which has the capability of transmuting base metals into silver. The reference to feeding the child anticipates the discussion of Cibation in Gate 7.

IV. 15 Loosing and knitting thereof be principles two. The two-fold process of *solve et coagula* (solution and congelation) is regarded by alchemists as the key to making the philosopher's stone. Repetition resulted in increasing purification of the proximate materials of the stone.

V.1 *Putrifaction*. For definition, see st. 3. Philalethes describes it as "a horrible Gate, whose entrance is dark with *Cimmerian* night, dreadful with many windings and turnings. And yet it is a Gate so necessary, that unless you pass through it, you may never expect to reap fruit from your labour; for without it can be no Life nor Generation, much less desired Multiplication" (*Exposition*, RR 321–22).

V.1 graine of wheate. Cf. John 12:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

V.4 crowes bill. Synonymous with the crow's head and other terms suggesting the blackness that symbolizes putrefaction or the *nigredo* stage of the alchemical process.

V.4 heate of *Balne* or . . . dunghill. Ripley advises moist, temperate heat, such as might be produced in a water bath (*balne*) or by placing the vessel in warm horse dung.

V.6 let the woman to wash be bowne. This stanza presents Ripley's version of the alchemical adage of the preparation of the philosopher's stone as "children's play and women's work." For discussion of this trope, see Abraham, "Women's Work" in *DAI* 219–20, and M.E. Warlick, "The Domestic Alchemist: Women as Housewives in Alchemical Emblems," in *Emblems and Alchemy*,

ed. Alison Adams and Stanton J. Linden (Glasgow: Glasgow Emblem Studies, 1998), 25–47.

V.7 Athenore. The alchemist's furnace; Philalethes says: "Therefore the Wise men have named the Furnace in which they work their Secrets, an *Athanor*, that is, Immortal, shewing that from the beginning to the end the Fire must not go out, for the extinction of it destroys the Work" (*Exposition*, RR 339–40, 364).

V.8 sapient Guido. Guido de Montanor; see earlier note.

V.8 Morien. Morienus Romanus, a hermit of Jerusalem, instructor of Khalid or Calid (635–704), and supposed author of one of the earliest hermetic books to be translated from Arabic to Latin, the *Compound of the Composition of Alchemy* by Robert of Chester in 1144. See Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 2:214–17. On the Latin text and its transmission, see Lee Stavenhagen, "The Original Text of the Latin *Morienus*," *Ambix* 17 (Mar. 1970): 1–12, and his translation and edition of *Morienus, A Testament of Alchemy* (Hanover, NH: Univ. Press of New England, 1974).

V.12 Noes flood. Genesis 7.

V.12 Abierunt in sicco flumina. Among several possibilities from the Psalms, perhaps the closest parallel is 74:15, "Thou didst cleave fountain and flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers."

V.13 Noah planted his vineyard. Genesis 9:20. In this stanza and the next Ripley celebrates the passing of the purgatorial darkness of the *nigredo* and the coming of the "light/Of Paradice," likening the transition from blackness to whiteness to the drying of the earth following Noah's flood. The vineyard and grapes symbolize a resurgence in growth of the philosopher's stone.

V.13 Ucifer. The reference is to cinnabar (Arabian *usfur* or *as-far*); the *Summa Perfectionis* states: "[Sulfur] is also united with mercury, and if associated through sublimation, uzifur is produced," *The Summa Perfectionis of Pseudo-Geber: A Critical Edition, Translation and Study*, ed. William R. Newman (Lei-

den: E.J. Brill, 1991), 667 and n. 50. See also the instructions for the preparation of uzifur in the *Libellus de Alchimia*, ascribed to *Albertus Magnus*, trans. Sister Virginia Heines, S.C.N. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1958), 35–36.

V.18 vitrificate. Converted to a glassy substance (*OED*). Philalethes warns, “a hasty rash *Vulcanist* shall make his Medicines to grow hard at the first, and with a stronger and continue degree of heat, to melt into a vitrificate substance, without any hope of future profit” (*Exposition*, *RR* 364).

V.20 riches shall be but few. As noted in the Introduction, a number of manuscript versions of the *Compound* omit the long satirical attack on alchemical charlatanism that begins with st. 21. These include Sloane MSS 300, 1092, 2174, 3809 and Oxford Corpus Christi Col. MS 172. Philalethes’ commentary also ends at this point; this section does, however, appear in the *TCB*.

V.24 starre slyme. “Applied to the alga *Nostoc*, which appears as a jelly-like moss on dry soil after rain, and was popularly supposed to be the remains of a fallen ‘star’ or meteor” (*OED*).

V.25 Celidonie, i.e. Celandine; for an extended description of this “herb of the Sun” and its medicinal virtues, see *The Complete Herbal by Nicholas Culpeper. A New Edition*, facs. (Birmingham: Kynoch Press, 1953), 59–62, 311.

V.25 *Secundines*. I.e., secundines (placenta).

V.27 *Westminster Kerke*. Here Ripley jests at the alchemists who haunted Westminster Abbey and at the extreme slowness of progress in completing its construction (see also st. 34). From the time of the beginning of building (1055) and consecration (1065) under Edward the Confessor, to its rebuilding under Henry III (1245), through fire and the Black Death in the 14th century, to final completion of the nave in 1517, progress on the church was, for various reasons, subject to lengthy interruptions. The Chapel of Henry VII was begun in 1502, and the western towers were not added until the 18th century (*The Catholic Encyclopedia* [New York: Robert Appleton, 1912], 15: 598).

V.31 *Paris* balls. I.e., tennis balls. Cf. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 2.4.131.

V.31 signets of Saint *Martins*. St. Martin of Tours (c.316–397), best known iconographically for cutting his cloak in half to clothe a beggar, became bishop of Tours in 372 but even then continued to live as a monk. His association with poverty is his chief identifying mark in this context, although in the fifteenth century he also comes to be identified with a goose, whose migration occurs at the time of his feast, November 12. See David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 3rd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 324–25. For a fuller account with many iconographic reproductions, see Mariella Liverani, *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, vol. 8 (Rome: Istituto Giovanni XXIII della Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1967), 1248–91.

V.31 *Newgate* or *Ludgate*. Famous London prisons.

V.37 bringeth a mazer. A wood bowl (*OED*).

V.39 Saint *Bennet*. I.e., St. Benedict (d.543), founder of the oldest monastic order in Europe.

V.42 lorrells. I.e., losels (worthless persons, profligates).

V.49 That thou doest coyne. Alchemists were often charged with “coyning” or counterfeiting.

VI.1 *Congelation*. In the *Marrow*, Ripley states succinctly, “Coagulation or Congelation is the induration or hardening of things, in *Calore Candido*, and the fixing of the Volatile Spirit” (*MP* 692). It is the culminating stage in preparing the white stone.

VI.11 Philosophers childe in the ayre is borne. Mercurius, the air-borne child or philosopher’s stone, is the product of the conjunction between masculine sulphur and feminine mercury. In his chapter “Of Conjunction,” Ripley states that the degree of heat should be increased, “Untill bright and shining in whitenes be thy Stone; / Then maist thou open thy glasse anone, / And feede thy childe which is ybore, / With milke and meate ay more and more” (st. 12). The “feeding” of the stone, i.e., cibation, is

the means whereby the white stone may grow sufficiently in size and strength to become the red stone. Ripley's poem, "The Mystery of Alchymists," which Ashmole printed in the *TCB* but which was not part of the 1591 *Compound*, appears to present this philosophical child in a reformist and millenarian light that conforms to the political and religious context of early modern England and Europe: "Putrefaction must go beforne,/ After Blacke he wilbe White, / Then thanke ye God the Chyld is borne. / This Child is both King and Emperour, / Through his region both far and neere; / All the World doth him honour, / By the vertue he hath taken of the Fire" (*TCB* 381).

VI.15 water is the secret and life of every thing. In the *Marrow*, Ripley adds to this underlying idea: "Understand also that our fiery Water thus acuated is called the Menstrual Water, in which Our Earth is dissolved, and naturally Calcined by Congelation; when you have made seven Imbibitions, then by a Circumvolution, putrifie again all the Matter without addition, beholding in the first place the blackness, then the Whiteness of the Congealed Matters" (*MP* 693).

VI.15 *Albien*. Ripley describes the "breaking of the waters" (*liquor amni*) in the amniotic cavity that precedes birth of the foetus. I have found no reference to this being called *Albien*.

VI.24 greene Lyon and not of vitriall. Here emphatically, Ripley states that the Green Lion does not mean vitriol but the crude, "unripe" ore from which the mercurial spirit can be extracted. See also note, Pref. 16.

VI.25 biscoc blood. "Biscoc," an obsolete form of biscuit; here perhaps blood the light brown color of biscuits (see *OED* 1.c.).

VI.25 milke white Dyademe. This is Ripley's image for the white stone, which is capable of transmuting base metals into silver. Philalethes uses a similar image at the end of his commentary on the sixth gate: "But when once thy Matter is become truly black, rejoyce, for this death of the Body will be the quickning of the Spirit, and then both Soul and Body will unite into a perfect whiteness, which is our Kingly Diadem" (*Exposition*,

RR 389).

VI.25 dispousate. I.e., despoused or betrothed (*OED.*)

VI.28 Imbibitions many. "The return of distilled liquid to the residue or 'earth' at the bottom of the alembic, followed by further distillation" (*DAI* 105).

VI.29 turne about thy wheele. See earlier notes, I.17, II.11.

VII.5 equipolent. I.e., equivalent.

VIII.1 *Sublimation*. Ripley's definition and description of this stage are repeated in the first and penultimate stanzas of the chapter: "make thy bodies first spirituall, / And then thy spirits . . . corporall." The remaining books discuss how to transform the white stone into the red stone, a process that involves repeating the *solve et coagula* cycle of distillation.

VIII.3 sublime not to the top of the vessell. The original 1591 line reads "sublime to the top of the vessell," which is obviously erroneous in light of the sense of the stanza as well as *TCB* and all but one of the Sloane MSS consulted (MS 2174).

IX.1 *Firmentation*. Ruland provides two related definitions of *Fermentatio*: 1) "The Exaltation of a Matter into its essential part by means of a ferment which penetrates the entire mass, and operates therein in a peculiar manner, acting immediately on the spiritual nature." 2) "The incorporation of a fermenting substance [e.g., yeast] with a substance which is to be fermented. . . . For when the stone is so subtle, . . . that when it is projected over an imperfect body it floats after the manner of an oil, without combining therewith, we need some other body, which still retains traces of its former affinity therewith, which shall receive and introduce it into other bodies" (Martinus Rulandus, *A Lexicon of Alchemy*, trans. A.E. Waite (1612; reprint, York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1984), 144.

IX.18 In man which healeth diseases all. Ashmole uses the two concluding lines of this stanza as occasion for a lengthy summary of the history of medicine from before the Flood to his own day. He identifies Ripley's "Quintessentiall Water" with an "Aethe-

riall and *Universall Medicine*" whose "perfect and incorruptible Qualities of Heate, Cold, Moisture and Drinesse are able not onely to *Nourish, Fortifie, and Encrease the Vitall Spirits*, but *Digest, Correct and Consume all Impediments and Corruptions* [that have] . . . encroached so far upon the *Body of Man*" (TCB 461).

X.1 Exaltation. The action of subliming or refining; bringing a substance to a higher degree of purity and potency. (This is the earliest use recorded in the *OED*).

X.1 Christ saying thus, if I exalted be. Cf. John 12:32, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

X.2 examine. I.e., tortured (*OED*).

X.2 contumelate. I.e., placed in a tomb together (*OED*).

X.3 intronize. I.e., enthroned (*OED*).

X.7 sigillate. I.e., sealed up (*OED*).

X.9 thy figure. I.e., the wheel process earlier described and the corresponding diagram at the end of the volume.

XI.1 Multiplication. Known also as Augmentation, for the reasons given. References to *Fermentation* and *Cibation* in st. 4 reflect the repetitiveness of the latter books of the poem.

XII.1 Projection. Ripley asserts that only in projecting the newly completed philosopher's stone (i.e., the "medicine") upon base metals will the correctness of its preparation be confirmed. Transmuted metals to which it is applied will then withstand the test of fire.

XII.2 First upon ferment. Ferment is a leavening agent or a substance that is added to dough to produce fermentation. To conserve the transmuting agent, Ripley appears to advise first making trial of the "medicine" upon a substance other than base metals.

XII.4 *Nunc dimittis*, etc. Ripley cites the opening words of the Latin Vulgate version of the Cantic of Simeon in Luke 2.29–

32 ("Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine" / "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord"), *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton, 1912), 11:159–60. He then uses the Latin to emphasize the necessity of paying careful and immediate attention to his words concerning the fundamentals of the art. In British Library Sloane MS 319, f.14^v, these words appear as marginalia opposite this passage.

Recapitulatio totius operis prædicti

Recap. 2 latitude. Here as in earlier references to the directions (west, north, east, and south) and the wheel design itself, Ripley uses "latitude" to indicate the transverse, "side to side" dimensions, as opposed to "altitude" (vertical distance) and "profundity" (extension downward). The resulting square figure is transformed into a circle in the *magnum opus*.

Recap. 2 red man & white wife. Ripley's most common symbols for the principles involved in the conjunction of opposites, i.e., philosophical sulphur and mercury, and the opposing qualities which they represent. These are the hot, dry, active, "male" principle, and the cool, moist, passive "female" principle (for additional examples, see *DAI*, 167–68).

Recap. 3 into the North proceed. Philalethes describes the "North Latitude of our Stone, [as] Winter, cold and dirty; here are the Elements brought to rest for a time, until a Generation be made in the bottom of the Glass, when through the will and power of God, a clean thing shall be brought out of this uncleanness and black venenosity" (*Exposition*, RR 338).

Recap. 6 lower Astronomy. Here and in the imagery of the previous stanzas, Ripley returns to the idea of the philosopher's stone as the microcosm or *astronomia inferior*, the making of which is thus a reinscribing of cosmic processes. The engraving (by John Goddard) of the "Wheele" accompanying the 1591

Compound, includes the following verse: "Our heaven this Figure called is / Our table also of the lower Astronomy / Which understood thou may not misse / To make our Medicen parfetly / On it therefore set thy study / And unto God both night and day / For grace and for ye Author pray."

Recap. 8 Pale & black. Ripley begins to recapitulate the various colors which were used symbolically to chart the progress of the philosopher's stone.

Recap. 11 *Raimond Lully* did call / His *Basiliske*. Ripley makes a similar reference in the *Marrow*: "This pure and fixed Oleaginous substance, *Raymundus* calls his *Basillsk*, [sic] whose Explication is so easie to be understood, that it needs no more Words" (MP 696).

An Admonition, wherein the Author declareth his erronious Experiments.

EE.4 vitriall. Ripley again states that the Green Lion does not mean vitriol (variously, a native or artificial sulphate of metals, *OED*) but the crude, "unripe" ore from which the mercurial spirit can be extracted.

EE.4 *In debili principio*. I.e., crippled or impaired from the beginning.

EE.5 Sal Armoniacke. I.e., sal-ammoniac, ammonium chloride (*OED*).

EE.5 Sandivere. I.e., sandiver, a liquid saline matter found floating over the glass after vitrification (*OED*).

EE.5 Sal Alcalie. I.e., sal alkali, "a saline substance obtained by lixiviating the calcined ashes of marine plants, soda ash" (*OED*).

EE.5 Sal allembroke. I.e., sal alembroth, "an old name for the double chloride of mercury and ammonium, $2(\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}.\text{HgCl}) + \text{H}_2\text{O}$, formerly believed to be a universal solvent" (*OED*).

EE.5 Sal attinckarre. I.e., altincar, crude borax (*OED*).

EE.5 Sal tartar. I.e., salt of tartar (*OED*).

EE.5 Sal gem. I.e., "gem-like salt," native chloride of sodium or rock-salt (*OED*).

EE.5 salt sod. I.e., crystallized sodium carbonate, sal soda (*OED*).

EE.6 markazite. I.e., marcasite or pyrites (*OED* cites *Compound* as earliest printed use).

EE.6 *AEs ust.* Calcined copper; "*AEs Ustum*, or copper calcin'd, is to be ground to powder, and washed with Spirit of Vinegar" (*Gebri Arabis Summa: The Sum of Geber Arabs*, Collected and Digested by William Salmon, in *MP*, 351).

EE.6 Crokefeere. I.e. crocus of iron; "crocus" was a "name given to various yellow or red powders obtained from metals by calcination;" (*OED* cites as earliest use).

EE.9 Celedonie with Secundines. See earlier notes, V.25.

EE.10 *Gebers* cooks. A common term of disparagement for crude and ignorant alchemical experimenters or "multipliers" who followed, or thought they followed, the influential teachings attributed to the medieval Arabian authority, Geber.

EE.13 myners two. In the *Marrow of Alchymie* (Salmon ed.), Ripley notes: "For our Metals are nothing else, than our two *Minerae*, viz. those of *Sol* and *Luna*, as *Raymundus* wisely Notes; The Splendor of *Luna*, and the Light of shining *Sol*. In these two *Minerae*, the Secret dwells; tho' the Splendor may for a while be hid from your Eyes, which by the help of Art, you may easily bring to light" (*MP* 696). Here *Minerae* refers to the matrix in which a metal or precious stone was supposed to grow (*OED*).

The Epistle by the same Author written to King Edward the 4.

Epist. 1 In this section Ripley abandons rhyme royal and changes to an 8-line verse form rhyming ababbcbc.

Epist. 10 Philosophers in the metheors. Ripley is referring, not to a genuine Aristotelian work, but to an alchemical section of

Avicenna's *Kitab ash-Shifa* that had been translated into Latin about 1200 and inserted into the fourth book of Aristotle's *Meteorology*, where it came to be accepted as genuine and achieved great popularity as *De congelatione et conglutinatione lapidum*. As Ripley notes in the second line of the stanza, Avicenna's main contention is that alchemy cannot accomplish any fundamental transformation in the nature of the metals worked upon, only superficial changes in appearance. For background and translation, see Newman, *The Summa Perfectionis of Pseudo-Geber*, 2–5. Thorndike notes that “Avicenna ha[d] also remarked in his *Alchemy*, however, that species can perhaps be reduced to first matter and then by the aid of the art formed into the species of the desired metal” (*HMES* 2:568).

Epist. 10 may be mercurizate. Possible form of “mercurification,” the action or process of obtaining the “mercury” of a metal; or “mercurify,” to change a metallic mass into mercury (*OED*).

Epist. 15 of the quadrangle make a figure round. Ripley's version of the famous “squaring of the circle,” the alchemists' image for the transformation of the four conflicting elements into the quintessence, the completion of the alchemical opus itself. Abraham aptly cites Ripley's dictum accompanying the wheel diagram: “When thou hast made the quadrangle round, then is all the secrett found” (*DAI* 189).

Epist. 17 Iposarcha. Hyposarcha, a species of dropsy (*OED*).

Epist. 17 Neshe. To make soft and tender (*OED*).

Epist. 19 Hermidocles. Possibly hermodactyli: “They are hot and dry, purge flegm, especially from the joints, therefore are good for gouts” (*The Complete Herbal by Nicholas Culpeper. A New Edition*, facs. [Birmingham: Kynoch Press, 1953], 314).

Epist. 19 Ipericon. I.e., hypericon or hypericum; a drug prepared from *Hypericum perforatum*, a common species of St. John-wort.

Epist. 19 tithimall. Here I follow the *TCB* text; a variant

spelling of "tithymal," an old name of the Spurge species of plants, much used in herbal medicine (*OED*).

Epist. 19 sperma Caeti. A fatty substance, derived from the head of a sperm-whale and purified, used in various medicinal preparations. *OED* cites *Compound* as earliest printed use.

Epist. 23 madder. A herbaceous climbing plant bearing small yellow flowers, the root of which was used in the preparation of medicines and red dyes (*OED*).

Epist. 27 In *bus* and *nibus*. Meaning uncertain but the context of heavenly ascent suggests that *nibus* may be an error for "nubilous" (cloudy), from *nubes* (cloud). In *TCB*, the line reads "In Bus and Nubi he shall arise and ascend," not "descend" as in 1591.

Epist. 28 Markaside. I.e., marcasite or pyrites (*OED* cites *Compound* as earliest printed use).

Epist. 29 round wheele turning of our Astronomie. See earlier notes, I.17, II.11, VI.29, and Recap. 6.

Epist. 30 Balneo Mare. Bain-Marie or balneum Mariae. A type of double boiler water bath used by alchemists to provide moderate heat for the various stages of the opus. Its invention was attributed to Maria Prophetissa (see Ruland, *Lexicon* 69).

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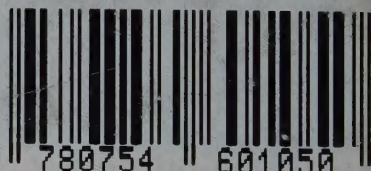
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